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Italian Fascism and Spanish Falangism in Comparison

Constructing the Nation

Giorgia Priorelli

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LUISS Guido Carli
Rome, Italy



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To my parents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The myth of the nation has permeated all aspects of Fascism from the beginning: culture and ideology, the concept of the individual and of masses, relations between state and society, domestic policy and foreign policy, the sense of tradition and attitude towards the future.¹

The words of Emilio Gentile are particularly suited to introducing this work, resulting as it does from a reflection on the ideological dimension of the fascist phenomenon generically understood.² It is true that fascism had as a ‘principle of its ideology the critique of ideologies’ and preferred to emphasise its practical action-oriented nature.³ Nonetheless, it was not ‘only a set of polemic negations’, but expressed a revolutionary vision of society and the state to be achieved in the light of its principles.⁴ Among these principles, corresponding to the ‘core concepts’ of the fascist ideological universe, is the concept of the nation.⁵ Far from constituting the object of a sterile theoretical debate within the fascist intellectual elites, it was, on the contrary, a real political myth that decisively contributed to the construction of the fascist reality and crucially influenced fascist political practices.

Retracing how fascism approached the issue of the nation and how it broke with the previous liberal national tradition is central. To this end, it is appropriate to dwell on the modern idea of the nation for a moment, drawing on an enlightening comparison of the historical experience of France and Great Britain by Roberto Vivarelli. In *I caratteri*

dell'età contemporanea, the Italian historian stresses that in both countries the appearance of the nation-state went hand in hand with the renovation of public institutions and with the substitution of 'citizens' for 'subjects'. The citizens—no longer the monarch or an oligarchy—held sovereignty and collectively constituted the nation, leading Vivarelli to conclude that the nation 'is born after the state': without the state, there is no public right and the qualification of 'citizens' has no value.⁶

Determining who were these new political actors is by no means simple, since the possession of political rights was not sufficient to identify them. The British and French models reveal that the right to vote, for instance, was not an essential concession for attributing the status of citizen. This right was progressively recognised throughout Europe from the end of the eighteenth century but was fully applied without distinction of social class or gender about a century and a half later. The central issue, therefore, is not so much to investigate what rights determined the attribution of the title of 'citizen' to an individual, but rather to establish 'who [had] the right to be recognised as belonging to a [particular] national community'.⁷

In this regard, Vivarelli recalls the lesson of Federico Chabod who pinpointed the existence of two different concepts of the nation: one of French origin, and one of German origin. The former evokes the Rousseauian concept of the *volonté générale* and emphasises the 'will of action' of the individual who feels part of a national community and consciously decides to be a member of it.⁸ The latter has, instead, a naturalistic feature. It presumes that belonging to a nation is primarily dependent on nature, which attributes "permanent" physical characteristics to different nations [...] based on blood (that is, the generation) and the "soil" to which that particular blood remains attached'.⁹

In Vivarelli's opinion, the most obvious limitation of Chabod's thesis is that he did not adequately take into account the relationship between the state and the nation. The nation, to be a real community of citizens, could not have a voluntary or naturalistic foundation since both were insufficient to ensure the presence of free and stable institutions. According to him, a community presupposes shared ideals and principles, and involves 'the acceptance of rules that, in the life of a state, are the laws'.¹⁰ Ultimately, the essence of a nation-state lies in the 'quality of civil values' which each social community shares and in its ability to answer 'the pivotal problem in the history of modern institutions', namely the issue of freedom.¹¹

This conceptualisation is of exemplary clarity, but it must be noted that the nation-state described above corresponds to the liberal-democratic state. How did fascism relate to such a model and how did it plan to replace it? The thought of Alfredo Rocco—Minister of Grace, Justice and Religious Affairs from 1925 to 1932 and a critical figure in the construction of the fascist institutional order—provides important indications in this respect. In *La trasformazione dello Stato*, which summarises the fundamental principles of the legal organisation of Fascist Italy, he stressed the existence of two main features of the liberal-democratic state. First, in his view, this kind of state placed on the same level and protected equally all the forces that were active in a country. Second, it did not have its own identity and consistency, meaning it welcomed all ideals and programmes without distinction. This implied that the state would become a battlefield in which different forces would compete for power. In Rocco's opinion, such was the case in Italy, where the 'almost complete triumph of liberalism and democracy' inexorably brought the country to the 'edge of the abyss'.¹²

The Fascist jurist acknowledged that the liberal-democratic experience yielded good results for the Anglo-Saxon peoples and in France due to the presence of an unbroken national tradition and a strong sense of the state. In Italy, things were different since the Roman tradition—nurtured by the Catholic Church and based on the 'principle of discipline, hierarchy and the submission of individuals to the state'—fell apart because of 'Germanism', 'medieval anarchy' and 'foreign servitude'.¹³ This last feature in particular made the state appear like an 'instrument of oppression' of external powers, which caused a particular 'spirit of mistrust and revolt against public authority' in the Italian people.¹⁴ The liberal-democratic state should have tamed this constant feeling of rebellion through a systematic process of 'political education' and 'state discipline', but it was 'spiritually and materially incapable' of doing so.¹⁵ Precisely because of this failure, the Italian masses inevitably showed the unified nation-state the same mistrust and aversion they had towards foreign domination.

For Rocco, the fact that the liberal state had survived under such conditions for more than 60 years was almost miraculous. Nonetheless, he believed it was just a matter of time before it would crumble since 'at the first great blow, that *state larva* would [be] shattered'.¹⁶ During the Great War, the Italian people showed their virtue and courage and saved the fatherland from destruction. However, once the hostilities had ended, the country entered a phase of complete confusion and disorientation. All

weaknesses were exposed as fighting ensued between opposing internal factions that tore it apart, and which it was unable to control. For the Fascist jurist, it was evident that the experience of the liberal-democratic state had exhausted Italy, and that the March on Rome represented the 'historical consecration of the collapse'.¹⁷

Once Mussolini had taken over the reins of the country, the building of the Fascist state began. It was conceived as the 'juridical incarnation of the nation', and in content and form its characteristics were distinct from those of the liberal-democratic state.¹⁸ It was a state with its own 'morals' and 'religion', its own idea of 'social justice', a precise 'economic task' and 'its political mission in the world' that foreshadowed its potential imperial expansion.¹⁹ Moreover, and above all, the Fascist state had its 'function', its 'will' and 'aims superior to those of individuals'.²⁰ Ultimately, it was a 'truly sovereign' state since, following a Machiavellian approach to politics, its goals prevailed, justifying any means to realise them.²¹

Fascism would have wiped out the old 'atomistic and mechanic' interpretation of the state.²² For Rocco, this was typical not only of the liberal and democratic doctrine but also of the socialist ideology that sacrificed the nation in favour of blind loyalty to the proletarian cause.²³ To such an idea of the political community, Fascism opposed a new organic and historical understanding of society. It was organic because society has 'objectives and life that go beyond the objectives and life of individuals'; it was historical in that it 'considers society in its continuing life' that lasts longer than the existence of the man.²⁴ In the opinion of the theorist of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (National Fascist Party or PNF), Fascism had the merit of having turned the relationship between society and the individual on its head. It replaced the liberal-democratic and socialist formula 'society for the individual' with the formula 'the individual for society'.²⁵ The change of perspective was total since, if the former raised the problem of individual rights, the latter prioritised the state's right and the duties of the people and the classes towards it.

Rocco did not question the relevance of the men and women who single-handedly constituted elements of the national community. Nonetheless, he attributed to society the absolute priority of its 'historical and immanent aims of conservation, expansion, improvement that were distinct from the aims of those who, *pro tempore*, compose it'.²⁶ Benito Mussolini himself had been clear on this topic. He pinpointed that Fascism rejected the conception of the nation as 'an accidental and

temporary grouping of individuals', asserting its nature as an 'organic and living entity that continues from generation to generation with an intangible physical, moral and spiritual heritage'.²⁷ The total sacrifice of the individual and the possible recourse to war represented the corollary to this Fascist conception of the man–society relationship in which the individual was the instrument and the nation-state the ultimate purpose.

Angelo Ventura states that such a paradigm overrode an entire political tradition which began with the 'hated principles of 1789' that placed man at the centre of social and political life.²⁸ In this sense, the Fascist revolutionary intentions were evident from the very beginning. During the foundational congress of the PNF held in Rome on 7 November 1921, the leader of the *camicie nere* (Blackshirts) explicitly declared that his party identified the nation with the state. It established the authority of the state—'supreme interpreter of the national soul and will'—'for all and against all without delay', otherwise 'an indefinite fractionation of factions and individuals' would plunge the country into chaos.²⁹ The political and moral implications that these statements contained became manifest during the following 20 years. Fascism was a radically illiberal ideology that denied the rights of minorities and sacrificed people's freedom in the name of the nation. The nation became the justification of specific political choices that took Italy down the path of a long authoritarian dictatorship. Far from succeeding in unifying the people under the PNF flag as it claimed, it discriminated between Italians on a political basis and led the country to civil war.

The myth of the nation assumed a dramatic centrality in the historical experience of fascism between the two world wars. It proved to be a cornerstone not only of the Italian manifestation of this phenomenon but also of other national manifestations. Contemporary historiography has expressed consensus on this issue, resulting from a productive discussion on the role of nationalism in fascism originating in the mid-1960s. During that period, Ernst Nolte opened an academic debate on the cultural aspects of fascism, inaugurating a new line of studies that focused on its ideological foundations. Explaining the methods and objectives of his analysis, he found 'the most marked characteristic of any fascism' in the 'combination of a nationalistic and socialist motif', attributing a priority to the former over the latter which progressively tended to decrease.³⁰ He suggested that 'fascism always remained "national fascism" in its era', anticipating—albeit in a sketchy way—the topic that was to be at the centre of the historiographical debate over 20 years later.³¹

The investigations of George L. Mosse during the 1970s helped to bring this historical problem further into focus. In *The Nationalisation of the Masses*, he stressed the importance of monuments and public celebrations as physical and spiritual spaces that celebrate the secular cult of the fatherland, and as ‘essential aspects of self-representation of the nation’.³² In this work, he mainly referenced the case of Nazi Germany. However, his analysis could also be applied to Italian Fascism and other regimes of a fascist nature, as Mosse pointed out a few years later when identified the ‘national mystique’ as the basis of the fascist myth.³³ He developed such considerations in 1999, depicting ‘nationalism with its symbols, rites and confession of faith’ as ‘a belief-system which provided the foundation for all fascist movements’, their ‘bedrock’ and a ‘springboard’ aimed at consolidating the bonds between the party and the people.³⁴

Mosse’s new understanding of fascism as a ‘nationalist revolution with its ideology and its own goals’ fits into a wide range of scholarly works on the nation as a fundamental element in the fascist doctrine that emerged at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s.³⁵ In 1989, Zeev Sternhell interpreted fascism as a synthesis of Sorel’s anti-materialist re-reading of Marxism and a ‘tribal nationalism based on a social Darwinism’, which had its origins in the historical experience of *Action Française* and a ‘violent antirationalism’.³⁶ A few years later, Roger Griffin defined fascism as a ‘genus of political ideology’ having its ‘inspirational’ and ‘mythic core’ in a ‘palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism’.³⁷ He recognised full ideological dignity in this phenomenon, detaching himself from the interpretation of fascism as a political religion.³⁸ Moreover, he indicated the lowest common denominator among its various manifestations in a radical nationalism—incompatible with liberal institutions and the Enlightenment tradition—that received legitimacy from the people, and had as a primary objective the regeneration of society after a period of real or presumed crisis.³⁹

In 1995, Stanley G. Payne described fascism as a ‘form of revolutionary ultranationalism for the national rebirth based on a primary vitalist philosophy’.⁴⁰ In so doing, he articulated in a more organic way what he briefly asserted in 1980 when he saw in the fascist movements ‘the most extreme expression of modern European nationalism’, clearly differentiating them from any authoritarian nationalist group.⁴¹ During the same period, Roger Eatwell characterised fascism as a ‘holistic-national radical Third Way’ between capitalism and communism.⁴² He rooted it in an aggregated concept of the nation aimed at overcoming divisions, creating

a strong sense of belonging to the community and satisfying a common purpose.

The most in-depth analysis of the national myth in fascism—albeit only covering the Italian case—is Emilio Gentile’s volume *La Grande Italia*, published for the first time in 1997.⁴³ In this broad historical reconstruction of the national ideal during the twentieth century, the historian dedicates a section of the book to the nature of the relations between Fascism and the nation, which he had defined as ‘modernist nationalism’ several years earlier. It refers to a particular form of nationalism having its first manifestation in futurism, which adopted an enthusiastic attitude towards modernity, conceived as a new era of greatness for the nation.⁴⁴ With this in mind, Gentile abandons the search for a definition that had characterised the historiographical debate up to that point. He reconstructs how Italian Fascists had manipulated the national myth and explored the political implications of this process on the country.

Following the path opened up by these eminent historians, in the early 2000s several scholars stressed the centrality of the national motif in fascism. According to Gregor James, fascism was ‘a tortured, enraged, and passionate demand for national renewal’.⁴⁵ Martin Blinkhorn identifies the centre of fascist ideology in an ‘extreme nationalism’ entailing ‘the belief in a national and/or racial revolution embodying rebirth from an existing condition of subjection, decadence or “degeneracy” leading to the forging of a “new fascist man”’.⁴⁶ Philip Morgan sees the primary purpose of the different fascisms in ‘the regeneration of their nations through the violent destruction of all political forms and forces which they held responsible for national disunity and divisiveness, and the creation of a new national order based on the moral and “spiritual” reformation of their peoples’.⁴⁷ Michael Mann defines fascism as ‘the pursuit of transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism’.⁴⁸ For his part, Robert Paxton recognises a ‘passionate nationalism’ as one of the main elements shaping fascist action. At the same time, Vivarelli highlights ‘the defence of the national values for the greatness of the fatherland’ as the ultimate fascist goal.⁴⁹

The prolific historiographical debate on the fascism–nation relationship reconstructed so far constitutes the basis of the present research, which seeks to contribute to the development of studies on fascism by adopting a comparative perspective. While keeping in mind Renzo De Felice’s remarks on the risks associated with formulating a general theory of fascism, taking the discourse on the nation as a ‘fascist minimum’

implies that it is not only possible but also useful in heuristic terms to resort to the idea of the nation in order to compare different fascist experiences.⁵⁰ Therefore, this work employs the ideological construction of the nation as the ‘property of comparison’.⁵¹ The idea of the nation will represent the yardstick for establishing affinities and dissimilarities between the objects to be compared or the ‘comparative units’, which in this case are the Italian Fascist and the Spanish Falangist political-ideological components of the regimes of Benito Mussolini and Francisco Franco respectively.⁵²

Three preliminary remarks will guide the examination. First, this study deliberately does not intend to compare the Italian and Spanish dictatorships. This choice rests on the conviction that the intrinsic differences existing between them—given the authentic fascist nature of the former but not of the latter—would have compromised the homogeneity of the comparison and the validity of the research results. This volume assumes as particularly persuasive the interpretation of Ismael Saz, who defines Francoism as a ‘fascistised dictatorship’.⁵³ He emphasises the real fascist project within the Generalísimo’s authoritarian compromise and the complex political and ideological relations among its several components. In so doing, Saz distances himself from the two classical interpretations of Francoism that prevailed in the academic debate until the early 1990s. The first is attributable to the sociologist Juan J. Linz, who describes Francoism as an ‘authoritarian regime of limited pluralism’.⁵⁴ The second is ascribable to Marxist historiography, which saw Francoism as a genuine fascist dictatorship.⁵⁵ In this last regard, Saz argues that for a long time there has been confusion between the Caudillo’s regime—mistakenly considered the Spanish manifestation of fascism—and the real Spanish fascist movement. Such was the *Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (Spanish Phalanx of the Councils of National Syndicalist Offensive or FE de las JONS), resulting from the merger of the *Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* and the *Falange Española* in February 1934. Thus, the question of the presence of fascism in Spain was often reduced to the problem of the dictatorship, ignoring the fact that ‘the ideology of the Spanish fascist movement was essentially exactly this: a wholly modern and secular fascist ideology’.⁵⁶

Whereas the comparison of the regimes of the Duce and the Generalísimo can be deceptive, the fascist political-ideological component—tied to the PNF and the FE de las JONS respectively—can be productively compared. This study will investigate fascist political cultures in Italy

and Spain. The concept of ‘political culture’ will be used here in Jean-François Sirinelli’s meaning as ‘the set of representations linking a human group in the political field’ in a ‘shared vision of the world, a common reading of the past, and a projection into a future to be lived together’.⁵⁷ This work will thus fill a historiographical gap, considering the existence of numerous comparative research works on extreme right dictatorships in the Old Continent in the interwar years, but a substantial lack of comparative analysis of full-blown fascisms in southern Europe.⁵⁸

The second preliminary remark concerns the outcomes of fascism in the two countries, whose diversity does not prejudice this analysis. It is known that fascism failed to become a regime in Spain, unlike in Italy. The Falange consistently remained only one of the constituent parts of Francoism, and its efforts to imprint a totalitarian turn on the dictatorship ultimately fell through. The Caudillo did not even contemplate that his role as supreme leader could be questioned, or that one of the political components of his government could prevail over the others. Therefore, whenever Spanish fascism strengthened its political presence within the country, he intervened to scale down its aspirations and put it back in its place.

The Generalísimo’s strategy began to be evident in April 1937, when Franco imposed the fusion of the FE de las JONS with the *Comunión Tradicionalista* to curb the increasing power of the Falange during the Civil War. For the same purpose, he forced some radical *camisas azules* (or Blueshirts, as the Falangists were also called) out of his executive branch on two occasions. The first was the crisis of spring 1941 as a consequence of the failed attempt of some Falangist hardliners to obtain a more significant role and hasten the fascistisation of the regime. The dictator apparently assumed an accommodating position towards this request. In fact, he ended up increasing the importance of the military component within his government and replacing the most intransigent Falangist ministers with more moderate party figures who were prepared to compromise. The second occasion was provided by the ‘Begoña accident’ of August 1942, during commemorations for the Carlist fallen in the Civil War held at the Basilica de Nuestra Señora de Begoña in Bilbao. Clashes between Carlists and Falangists occurred, degenerating when a Blueshirt launched two hand grenades in the direction of the Minister of the Army, General José Enrique Varela, who was attending the memorial ceremony. The General remained unharmed, but two people were injured. The attempts of some Falangist ministers to downplay the matter

were of no avail. Under pressure from Varela and the upper echelons of the military, Franco not only condemned to death those responsible for the aggression but also relieved Falangist ministers of their duties. Among them was his brother-in-law, the pro-Falangist and Axis sympathiser Ramón Serrano Súñer, who held the reins of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time.⁵⁹

Following the events of the years 1941–42, the Falangist project of nationalisation (not the party itself) ended. The nationalisation plan of the other prominent political culture within the Francoist regime, namely National Catholicism, replaced it.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, underestimating the influence that Falangism (or National Syndicalism) had on Spanish politics, especially from the beginning of the Civil War until the early 1940s, would be to misjudge it. During the 1936–39 conflict, the Falange acted as the ‘main mass party of nationalist Spain’.⁶¹ In the years 1939–41, which Saz describes as ‘the highest point in terms of regime fascistisation’, the dictatorship had an almost entirely fascist appearance.⁶² Through the figure of Ramón Serrano Súñer, supported by some of the most committed *camisas azules*, the party controlled the Ministry of the Interior from 1938 to 1940 and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1940 to 1942. Eminent personalities of Falangism, such as Antonio Tovar and Dionisio Ridruejo, supervised the management of the press and propaganda. A ‘genuine fascist radicalism’ drove the activity of the trade unions, particularly the *Sindicato Español Universitario* (Spanish Students’ Union or SEU), which became the symbol of the regime in universities after Franco’s victory in April 1939.⁶³ Moreover, the dictatorship embraced the aesthetics and the emblems of the Falange, whose main tasks included the organisation of parades and public ceremonies and the political indoctrination of Spaniards through numerous and efficient party organisations.⁶⁴ Finally, from the end of the Civil War until 1942, the Falangist *Junta Política* (Political Junta) had a significant impact on the choices of the new government, to the point that it created the impression of being the ‘main instrument of the regime’s political direction’.⁶⁵

These considerations corroborate the hypothesis that the nationalisation project that the Falange sought to implement represents a stage in the evolution of Spanish nationalism that is all but negligible. Far from being extraneous to the continental context, it was consistent with the process of totalitarian appropriation of the idea of the nation implemented by fascisms in Europe between the two world wars. The fact that it

happened in a fascistised but not a properly fascist regime does not constitute an impassable borderline. Instead, it makes Falangist nationalism even more interesting and further stimulates academic curiosity about this historical phenomenon.⁶⁶

The third and last preliminary remark regards the concreteness and the solidity of this research. Although it focuses on ideologies, this study anchors its theoretical reflections on the nation of the foremost Fascist and Falangist leaders and ideologues in empirical data. Without prejudice to what was initially said about the existence of a positive fascist ideology, it is crucial to remember that fascism was born out of practice and from political action to which its ideas were inextricably linked. As Vivarelli stresses, 'ideas in themselves do not go anywhere'.⁶⁷ Thus, this investigation analyses how ideas relate to facts and how they were practically translated into domestic and foreign policy choices, following a trend that was not only 'logical' but also 'necessary'.⁶⁸

In light of the above, this work addresses the following research questions. Was the nation a common denominator of Italian Fascism and Spanish Falangism? What concept of the nation did they have? Did it change over time and, if so, how? To what extent did the particular Fascist and Falangist concepts of the nation influence the choices of their countries in domestic policy and foreign policy? Finally, what were the similarities and the main differences between the Italian Fascist and the Spanish Falangist ways of interpreting the nation and practically implementing it?

The time frame of this analysis goes from the early 1930s to the early 1940s. It was a period of great political turmoil in Europe, coinciding with Aristotle Kallis' second and third waves of 'authoritarian departure' across the continent.⁶⁹ In that decade, both Italy and Spain went through a phase of strong radicalisation of their politics and an intensification of their processes of fascistisation.⁷⁰ These two trends were attributable to both endogenous and exogenous causes, such as the beginning of the Italian Fascist military campaign in Abyssinia and the Civil War in Spain on the one hand, and the overwhelming intrusion of German National Socialism into the dynamics of power in the Old Continent on the other hand. Chronologically, the research concludes in the years 1942–43. As mentioned above, it was in 1942 that the project of Falangist nationalisation of the Spaniards was effectively abolished. A year later, the vote on Grandi's Order of the Day on 25 July meant not only the collapse of Mussolini's regime but also the end of the dream of realising a great

Fascist nation. As regards the documentation consulted, this investigation is mainly based on Fascist and Falangist press publications and, specifically, on the most relevant theoretical periodicals linked to the PNF and the Falange. Fascist and Falangist literature, party programmes and pamphlets, together with diaries of eminent exponents of the two movements, doctrinal speeches by their foremost leaders and theorists, and coeval legislation complete the picture in terms of primary sources.

The book consists of four thematic chapters, corresponding to the four evolutionary stages of the idea of the nation in Italian Fascism and Spanish Falangism. Chapter 2 investigates the origins of the idea of the nation in these fascist political cultures, and how it was articulated in the *destruens* and *costruens* phases of their respective movements. Chapter 3 examines the theme of the empire and how the PNF and the Falange structured it. It also evaluates whether the empire represented the logical outpouring of the nationalist ideology of the two parties. Chapter 4 reflects on the nature of the relationship between nation and race—not by chance often linked to the theme of the empire—analysing how Fascism and Falangism approached it from their origins and how it changed over time. Finally, Chapter 5 highlights the Fascist and National Syndicalist plans for a New European Order that seemed to materialise at the end of the 1930s, revealing the role that Italy and Spain were to play in it according to the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules*.

NOTES

1. Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 157 [I ed. 1997].
2. In this volume, the word ‘fascism’ will be used without any specific national qualification in its broader and general meaning, while ‘Fascism’ will be specifically employed to indicate the Italian manifestation of this phenomenon.
3. Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell’ideologia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), 421.
4. Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007), 77–78 [I ed. 2002].
5. The explanation of the meaning of ‘core concept’ is in Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and political theory: A conceptual approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 49–85.

6. Roberto Vivarelli, *I caratteri dell'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 75. On the modern idea of nation see also Jean Plumyène, *Le nazioni romantiche. Storia del nazionalismo nel XIX secolo* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1982); Johan Huizinga, 'Patriotism and nationalism in European history,' in *Men and ideas: History, middle ages, the Renaissance*, ed. Johan Huizinga (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 97–155; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Mourir pour la patrie et autres textes* (Paris: PUF, 1984), 105–141; John Stuart Mill, *Mill on bentham and coleridge* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), 124; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the nation 1707–1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 361–375.
7. Vivarelli, *I caratteri dell'età contemporanea*, 75–76.
8. Federico Chabod, *L'idea di nazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999), 55–56.
9. Ibidem, 68.
10. Vivarelli, *I caratteri dell'età contemporanea*, 76–81.
11. Ibidem, 81.
12. Alfredo Rocco, *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato liberale allo Stato fascista* (Roma: La Voce, 1927), 12–14.
13. Ibidem, 14.
14. Ibidem.
15. Ibidem.
16. Ibidem, 15.
17. Ibidem.
18. 'La nuova Italia,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 186 (6 August 1926), in *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (Firenze: La Fenice, 1951–1963), vol. XXII, 188.
19. Rocco, *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato liberale allo Stato fascista*, 17.
20. Ibidem, 18.
21. Ibidem.
22. Alfredo Rocco, 'La dottrina politica del fascismo,' in *Scritti e discorsi politici di Alfredo Rocco. III. La formazione dello Stato fascista (1925–1934)*, with a preface by Benito Mussolini (Milano: Giuffrè, 1938), 1095.
23. According to Rocco, liberalism, democracy and socialism were expressions of the same theory of the society and the state. Their antithesis was just 'of the method, not of goals.' Indeed, these three political doctrines had a shared aim: the well-being of the individual that liberalism and democracy wanted to achieve with liberty, and socialism with the collective organisation of production. They had the same idea of 'the state essence and aims,' and of 'the relationship between society and individual.' The only difference lay in 'the way of realising those aims and those relations.' Rocco, 'La dottrina politica del fascismo,' 1095–99. The quotes in the note are on pages 1098–99.

24. Ibidem, 1101.
25. Ibidem.
26. Ibidem, 1102.
27. 'La nuova Italia,' 188.
28. Angelo Ventura, 'La svolta antiebraica nella storia del fascismo italiano,' *Rivista Storica Italiana* CXIII, 1 (2001): 41.
29. 'La seconda giornata del Congresso Fascista. Il trionfale discorso di Mussolini all'Augusteo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 268 (9 November 1921): 1.
30. Ernst Nolte, *Three faces of fascism: Action française, Italian fascism, national socialism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), 460. English version of the original monograph *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche: Action française, italienischer Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Piper, 1963).
31. Ibidem, 460.
32. George L. Mosse, *The nationalisation of the masses: Political symbolism and mass movements in Germany from the Napoleonic wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Fertig, 1974), 44–46. The quote is on page 46.
33. George L. Mosse, 'Introduction: A general theory of fascism,' in *International fascism: New thoughts and new approaches*, ed. George L. Mosse (London: Sage, 1979), 20.
34. George L. Mosse, *The fascist revolution: Toward a general theory of fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), xi–xiii.
35. Ibidem, xi.
36. Zeev Sternhell, *The birth of fascist ideology: From cultural rebellion to political revolution* (Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1994), 8–10. English translation of the original *Naissance de l'idéologie fasciste* (Paris: Fayard, 1989). On the influence of Accion Française on fascism, see Zeev Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire, 1885–1914. Les origines françaises du fascisme* (Paris: Fayard, 1978).
37. Roger Griffin, *The nature of fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), 26, 28.
38. Ibidem, 30–32. In addition to George Mosse's above-mentioned works, on fascism as a political religion see, with particular reference to the Italian case, Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993), especially 41–60, 107–154. Cf. also Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, 343–369.
39. Griffin, *The nature of fascism*, 32–39. See also Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2–3.
40. Stanley G. Payne, *A history of fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 14.
41. Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 14.
42. Roger Eatwell, *Fascism: A history* (New York: Allen Lane, 1996), 14 [I ed. 1995]. See also Roger Eatwell, 'The nature of generic fascism: The

- “fascist minimum” and the “fascist matrix”,’ in *Comparative fascist studies: New perspectives*, ed. Constantine Iordachi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 134–161; Roger Eatwell, ‘Fascism,’ in *The Oxford handbook of political ideologies*, eds. Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 474–492.
43. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 157–241. On fascist nationalism see Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione*, 242–245.
 44. Emilio Gentile, ‘Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al fascismo (1909–1920),’ in *Futurismo, cultura e politica*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 105–159. On the concept of ‘modernist nationalism’ see also Emilio Gentile, *The struggle for modernity: Nationalism, futurism and fascism* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 45–47. More generally, on fascism as a form of modernity see Roger Griffin, *Modernism and fascism: The sense of a beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007). On the same topic but from different perspectives: Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany* (London: Penguin, 1993) [1 ed. 1982]; Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Geoff Eley, *Nazism as fascism: Violence, ideology and the ground of consent in Germany 1930–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
 45. James Gregor, *Phoenix: Fascism in our time* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1999), 162, 166.
 46. Martin Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the right in Europe 1919–1945* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 115–116.
 47. Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945* (London: Routledge, 2003), 13–14.
 48. Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13.
 49. Robert Paxton, *The anatomy of fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 41; Roberto Vivarelli, *Fascismo e storia d’Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), 124.
 50. Renzo De Felice, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2012), 20–22 [1 ed. 1969]. Among criticisms of the concept of generic fascism, see also Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and definition*, 175–176, 191–220. As regards the expression ‘fascist minimum,’ Payne used it for the first time in *Fascism: Comparison and definition*, 196.
 51. Luciano Cafagna, ‘La comparazione e la storia contemporanea,’ *Meridiana* 6 (1989): 15–28.
 52. Jürgen Kocka and Heinz Gerhard Haupt, ‘Comparison and beyond: Traditions, scope, and perspectives of comparative history,’ in *Comparative and transnational history: Central European approaches and new*

- perspectives*, eds. Jürgen Kocka and Heinz Gerhard Haupt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 14.
53. Ismael Saz Campos, 'El franquismo. ¿Régimen autoritario o dictadura fascista?' in *El régimen de Franco (1936–1975): política y relaciones exteriores*, ed. Javier Tusell (Madrid: UNED, 1993), vol. I, 189–201. The quote is on page 195.
 54. Juan J. Linz, 'An authoritarian regime: Spain,' in *Cleavages, ideologies and party systems*, eds. Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen (Helsinki: Academic Bookstore, 1964), 291–341.
 55. For an accurate reconstruction of the debate on the nature of the Franco regime, see Glicerio Sánchez Recio, 'Dictadura franquista e historiografía del franquismo,' *Bulletin d'histoire contemporaine de l'Espagne* 52 (2017): 71–82; Julián Sanz Hoya, 'Falangismo y dictadura. Una revisión de la historiografía sobre el fascismo español,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2013), 25–60; Teresa María Ortega López, "Se hace camino al andar". Balance historiográfico y nuevas propuestas de investigación sobre la dictadura franquista,' *Ayer* 63 (2006): 259–278.
 56. Ismael Saz Campos, 'Paradojas de la historia, paradojas de la historiografía. Las peripecias del fascismo español,' *Hispania* 207 (2001): 143–176. The quote is on page 144.
 57. Jean-François Sirinelli, 'De la demeure à l'agora. Pour une histoire culturelle du politique,' in *Axes et méthodes de l'histoire politique*, eds. Serge Bernstein and Pierre Milza (Paris: PUF, 1998), 391. See also Ismael Saz Campos, 'La historia de las culturas políticas en España (y el extraño caso del fascismo español),' in *L'histoire culturelle en France et en Espagne*, eds. Benoit Pellistrandi and Jean-François Sirinelli (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 2008), 215–234. Specifically on fascist political culture in Franco regime, see Ismael Saz Campos, 'Fascismo y nación en el régimen de Franco. Peripecias de una cultura política,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, 61–67.
 58. Among the most significant contributions, see Ismael Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo* (Valencia: Universidad de València, 2004); Javier Tusell, Emilio Gentile, and Giuliana de Febo (eds.), *Fascismo y Franquismo. Cara a cara* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2004); Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the right in Europe 1919–1945*; MacGragor Knox, *Common destiny: Dictatorship, foreign policy and war in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Manuel Loff, *Salazarismo e Franquismo na época de Hitler (1936–1942): convergência política, preconceito ideológico e oportunidade histórica na redefinição internacional de Portugal e Espanha* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 1996); Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and definition*; Richard Bessel

- (ed.). *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparison and contrasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Griffin, *The nature of fascism*; Charles F. Delzell (ed.), *Mediterranean fascism 1919–1945* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1970).
59. On the crisis of spring 1941 and the facts of Begoña in August 1942 see Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco regime 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 285–298, 302–312.
 60. Nevertheless, Falange's decline did not coincide with the defeat of the other European fascisms, especially the Italian and the German ones, in the period 1943–45. It has, at least initially, endogenous causes dating back to the period 1941–42. See Ismael Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 163–165; Ismael Saz Campos, 'Política en zona nacionalista: la configuración de un régimen,' *Ayer* 50 (2003): 83; Ismael Saz Campos, 'El primer franquismo,' *Ayer* 36 (1999): 215–216; Robert O. Paxton, 'Franco's Spain in comparative perspective,' in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Ruiz Carnicer, 21.
 61. Saz Campos, 'Política en zona nacionalista: la configuración de un régimen,' 61.
 62. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 162.
 63. Ibidem, 162. On the SEU, see Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939–1965: la socialización política de la juventud universitaria en el franquismo* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1996).
 64. See Zira Box, *España, año cero. La construcción simbólica del franquismo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2010), especially 341–358.
 65. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 162. See also Paxton, 'Franco's Spain in comparative perspective,' 18–20.
 66. For the definition of Francoism as a fascistised regime see Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 79–90.
 67. Roberto Vivarelli, 'Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano,' *Rivista Storica Italiana* CXXI, 2 (2009): 755.
 68. Ibidem.
 69. Aristotle Kallis, 'The "fascist effect": On the dynamics of political hybridisation in inter-war Europe,' in *Rethinking fascism and dictatorship in interwar Europe*, eds. Aristotle Kallis and Antonio Costa Pinto (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 18–19.
 70. In recent years, a vast corpus of literature has emerged on cultural translations among different fascist (and fascistised) regimes and on the processes of cross-fertilisation of ideas in Axis Europe. For a reconstruction of the recent historiographical debate on this topic, see as main reference points: Toni Morant i Ariño, 'Spanish fascist women's transnational relations during the Second World War,' *Journal of Contemporary History*

4 (2019): 834–857; Johannes Dalfinger and Dieter Pohl (eds.), *A new nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and transnational networks in the National Socialist sphere of influence, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2018); Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel (eds.), *Nazism across borders: The social policies of the Third Reich and their global appeal* (London: German Historical Institute, 2018); Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (eds.), *Fascism without borders: Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017); Benjamin Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); David D. Roberts, *Fascist interactions: Proposals for a new approach to fascism and its era, 1919–1945* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016); Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Aristotle Kallis and Antonio Costa Pinto (eds.), ‘Embracing complexity and transnational dynamics: The diffusion of fascism and the hybridisation of dictatorships in inter-war Europe,’ in *Rethinking fascism and dictatorship in interwar Europe*, 272–282; Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic fascism: Ideology, violence, and the sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Arnd Bauerkämper, ‘Transnational fascism: Cross-border relations between regimes and movements in Europe, 1922–1939,’ *East Central Europe* 2–3 (2010): 214–246; Claudia Baldoli, *Exporting fascism: Italian fascists and Britain’s Italians in the 1930s* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Tim Kirk, ‘Working towards the Reich: The reception of German cultural politics in South-Eastern Europe,’ in *Working towards the Führer: Essays in honour of Sir Ian Kershaw*, eds. Anthony McElligott and Tim Kirk (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 205–223.



CHAPTER 2

The Ideology of the Nation in Fascism and Falangism

A LOOK AT THE PAST: THE ROOTS OF THE FASCIST AND THE FALANGIST NATIONS

For us, the word ‘people’ [...] does not signify a sociological nationality. It indicates the human element of the state, which manifests itself not in the multitude of individuals but in a metaphysical substance. Its *raison d’être* lies in history and it generates the nation as it realised itself in the state. The national community arises from the consciousness of this realisation of the people in the state, which the young Spanish literature of the Falange defines with the term ‘the unitary sense of the people’. (Beneyto Pérez, *El nuevo Estado español*, 1938)¹

Thus the jurist Carlo Costamagna summed up the essence of the nation for Fascism, which equally applies to Falangism, as reflected in the PNF’s *Political Dictionary*. For these two political cultures, the nation constituted the soul of the state and the engine of its energies. Moreover, it represented a pillar in their ideology and one of the most extraordinary tools of legitimacy in their possession. The exaltation of the nation and the more or less successful attempts to monopolise it fascistically were a constant in the complex ideological processes undertaken by the Black-shirts and the Blueshirts, which, from their origins, sought to revive this ideal. It was their conviction that an authentic national conscience had been lost over time or, in the case of Italy, had never really existed.

Whether it was the ancient Spanish empire or the newborn Italian state, Falangist and Fascist theorists faced the same great historical challenge, namely instilling in the people a sense of belonging to their respective national communities.

In the opinion of PNF and Falange ideologues, a strong feeling of bewilderment affected Italian and Spanish citizens. Consequently, the latter did not orient their political action to the benefit of national interests but to particularistic goals and selfish satisfaction. This sense of confusion that the Fascist and National Syndicalist intellectual elites perceived fits into the broader context of a general continental crisis that seemed to occur at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to many European philosophers and scholars, a cultural, social and political decay infested colonial powers and recently unified countries.² The Blackshirts and the Blueshirts retrieved this 'narrative of the crisis', citing late eighteenth-century rationalism and the inability of liberal governments to keep up with modernity as the causes of the upheaval that was shaking Europe at the time. Moving from these assumptions, the decline of the national ideal became a recurring theme in the reflections of both movements. Thus, Onésimo Redondo Ortega, founder with Ramiro Ledesma Ramos of the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista in October 1931, wrote: 'who doubts that the idea of the fatherland has fallen in Spain? The affection for the homeland or the love of Spain did not fall. [...] The national idea did.'³ Similarly, in 1934, the Fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile, referring to the first 60 years of Italian unitary governments, lamented: 'the idea of the fatherland decayed and life was no longer a mission and a duty, but a banquet in which everyone tried to participate in every way.'⁴

Among the several manifestations of the nationalist phenomenon that started to shape European politics from the middle of the nineteenth century, fascist nationalism was one of the most significant forms. It revealed itself in its completeness as the expression of that 'drive to dominate' talked about by Johan Huizinga, and acquired a mass dimension.⁵ Italian and Spanish fascisms saw in the nation a formidable tool to establish a *modus vivendi* with modern times, that is, an instrument to counter the imbalances, insecurities and fears that modernity engendered. The aim of PNF and Falange theorists was to promote a regenerated nation, a new nation that was not an artificial creation of a group of intellectuals disconnected from the history and the soul of the country. The Fascist and the Falangist nations could not be born with a deficit of legitimacy, but had

to be rooted in a past in which the country had given a demonstration of sacrifice, cohesion and heroism.

As Umut Özkirimli correctly stresses, ‘the nationalist discourse always looks back in time’.⁶ The presence of a ‘temporal claim’ is a constant of the nationalist phenomenon, and fascist nationalism was no exception.⁷ The recovery of ideological aspects relating to theories or doctrines dating back to earlier periods represents a powerful tool of legitimacy for those who resort to them. For the fascist political and intellectual elites, it was useful to demonstrate the ‘linear time of the nation’—namely, the permanent and diachronic presence of the nation—to justify their choices concerning the particular configuration to give to the national community.⁸ They highlighted every possible link between their idea of the nation and the past to legitimise the present, and chose which ideological elements to include in their doctrine as useful and which to discard as unsuitable.

In that sense, the case of Italian Fascism is paradigmatic. From the beginning, intellectuals of the *Movimento Sansepolcrista* spent most of their energy trying to return the ideal of the nation to centre stage of the political scene of their country. In their opinion, people had forgotten this ideal during the post-Risorgimento period and the liberal governments of the unified state betrayed it.⁹ Mussolini and his ideologues adopted a large part of Italian nationalist thought on this issue, which provided the doctrinal basis that was lacking in their primarily action-oriented movement.¹⁰ The ideas of Enrico Corradini, Luigi Federzoni, Alfredo Rocco, Francesco Coppola, Roberto Forges Davanzati and Maurizio Maraviglia, to name a few, contributed greatly to consistency in Fascist ideology, which was ‘culturally almost unprepared’ and needed theoretical support to accurately define its strategy to conquer the state.¹¹

Although Italian nationalism was an expression of the crisis that affected the Old Continent at the end of the nineteenth century, its supporters considered it an autochthonous phenomenon and always claimed autonomy from foreign influences.¹² Its origins date back to the early twentieth century, when a non-structured, ‘aesthetical and vitalistic nationalism’ appeared in Italy as the manifestation of a feeling rather than a real ideology.¹³ In that context, Futurism emerged as the cultural and political avant-garde of a modernist nationalism that rejected the past and exalted modernity, dynamism, violence and the impetuous force of youth.¹⁴ At the same time, a more ‘traditionalist’ nationalism arose which, like Futurism, hoped for an “intensification of Italianness” through

modernity' but, unlike it, saw in the historical tradition the glue of the nation.¹⁵

The foundations for this last type of nationalism were laid in the summer of 1909 in Turin, around the newspaper *Il Tricolore*. However, it was in the winter of the following year, at the first congress of the movement held in Florence, that the political magma that formed peninsular nationalism became a party.¹⁶ On that occasion, those in the country who embraced a 'nationalistic view or sentiment' showed the will to 'shape their fluid and elastic material'.¹⁷ The creation of the *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana* (Italian Nationalist Association or ANI) in December 1910 represented an attempt to define the organisational basis of a movement that brought together an extremely heterogeneous group of individuals. Anti-democrats coexisted with democrats, although the latter left the party in December 1912. Imperialists sat next to irredentists, along with monarchists and republicans, spiritualists and determinists, protectionists and liberals. Defenders of international solidarity rubbed shoulders with supporters of the power of the nation, Jews with anti-Semites, Catholics with anticlerical materialists.¹⁸

On the eve of the First World War, Italian nationalism became more coherent due to regular congressional debates. It was the voice of anti-democratic, anti-liberal, anti-socialist, anti-masonic and protectionist demands in the economic field, but without attaining complete ideological cohesion and never succeeding in unifying the different streams within it.¹⁹ Despite 'so much diversity of colours and tones', ANI members shared a firm belief in the need to renew national politics and to make Italy a vigorous and industrious nation.²⁰ Italian nationalism, presenting itself as the heir to the most genuine tradition of the Risorgimento and retrieving the myth of the incomplete national revolution, was the first anti-parliamentary reaction to post-unitary governments. It accused them of being corrupt, depriving the country of its greatness, and forcing the political community to recognise itself in a social class rather than in the nation.²¹ Fomenting infighting, they were guilty of impeding the union of the people to which the founders of the fatherland had devoted their existence.

The Great War in some ways confirmed this ideology of the crisis.²² It overturned the existing distribution of power and involved an unprecedented mass mobilisation despite the traditional 'strong depoliticisation of the [Italian] popular classes'.²³ The world conflict seemed to awaken the most energising forces of the people, and to shake off the apathy that

had marked the life of the state until then. The irreversible breakdown of the post-unity liberal order caused by the war substantiated the belief that new social, political and institutional avenues were forming in the country.²⁴ In this traumatic historical phase in which the traditional reference points seemed to get lost, the only certainty was the nation for which millions of Italians fought in the trenches, and on which the identity of the people had to be rebuilt.²⁵ As Emilio Gentile stresses, the First World War implied the ‘sudden revelation of the reality of the nation’ sacralised by the ‘proof of sacrifice’ and ‘sanctified by the blood of His children’.²⁶ It attributed to the national myth a mystical aura, became the transformer of various forms of Italian nationalism and consolidated its theories.

Nationalism ended up constituting the ideological source on which the young Mussolini, who left the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (Italian Socialist Party or PSI) in November 1914 after embracing interventionism, drew to support the revolutionary practices of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* (Fascist squads), founded in March 1919. Even if Fascism did not share the elitist traits of nationalism and rejected the ‘hard, naturalistic and positivist’ elements attributed to the nation, it absorbed this doctrine even before the merger of the ANI with the PNF in February 1923.²⁷ In particular, adopting the nationalist historical reconstruction of post-Risorgimento political events, Fascist ideologists asserted that the formal unification of the country did not correspond to the unity of intents, values and ideals. The state had failed in its attempt to establish a stable political order and to stand firm in the face of the pitfalls that modernity presented. The entry of the masses onto the political scene and the inability of the liberal ruling class to channel social demands in the parliamentary arena were among the factors that determined the crisis of the united Italian state, which had to deal with fragile financial structures, an underdeveloped economy and a still mostly illiterate population. Disappointment at the low Italian international weight compared with that of other European powers—especially after the failure of Crispi’s colonial enterprise in 1896—and the urgent need to homogenise the several normative codes existing in the kingdom completed the picture.

According to Fascism, the creation of a heavily centralised administrative machinery, which was the result of the extension of the Statuto Albertino and the Savoy civil and criminal law to the whole peninsula, had not been a prudent decision. It not only undervalued the different realities within the state—each of which preserved its unique secular traditions—but it did not even promote the autonomous and original development

of the new state apparatus. The country was united only in a bureaucratic sense but lacked a genuinely national political class that was able to face problems from a general and broader perspective. What Gherardo Casini, co-director with Giuseppe Bottai of the periodical *Critica fascista*, wrote in this regard is emblematic:

Italy – born of monarchic-revolutionary compromises and the decadence of the small states, thanks to the heroic efforts of a few apostles – drowned the little state of Piemonte in the disoriented and underdeveloped country, which was economically primordial and with a social structure that still had something of the medieval period [...] Therefore, the Italian state was the state of no one, that is, an administrative authority more than a political one. It became the instrument of the oligarchs of a closed caste that identified itself with the nation and organised the formidable trick of an alleged democratic politics, while worrying about popular interests only depending on its fortunes.²⁸

The ‘frigid’ and ‘abulic’ state lacked the ‘enlightenment of the whole people, democratically considered, in the awareness of its spiritual unity’.²⁹ According to Fascist ideologues, the problem had a cultural origin. In over 50 years of national unity, there was not a single educational principle that built the character and conscience of all citizens. Love for the country touched the population only in a casual, rough and rhetorical way. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the great mass of Italians had no national feeling, except in a confused and superficial manner. The country lacked a ‘moral conscience’, which is a fundamental condition for conceiving any plan of greatness for the nation.³⁰ As Camillo Pellizzi wrote:

It is the moral conscience that sets the most significant problems of practice and politics, and it is useless to know all the facts when one does not know what he wants to do. It is also useless to say that we want a great Italy when our consciousness is not big and clear enough to conceive this future and too generic greatness of our country.³¹

The nineteenth century bequeathed to the political class of the twentieth century a free and independent state with a growing population that had been divided under foreign oppression for a long time, but that was not yet identifiable as a national community. Italy had become a ‘caricature’.³² There was moral disorder among the Italians, who did

not recognise themselves as such. Even worse, they did not have any interest in what happened in the country. As Volt wrote in *Gerarchia*, 'in reality, national self-awareness never existed'.³³ Building on this conviction, Fascist ideologists argued that 'a pile of vices and defects' had settled upon the mentality and habits of the citizens as the result of 'centuries of subjugation and backwardness'.³⁴ Moral redemption was necessary, but the Italians seemed to have fallen into a condition of profound drowsiness and moral weakness from which they found it difficult to escape.

In the opinion of the Blackshirts, it was Giuseppe Mazzini who first tried to regenerate Italians and struggled to complete the process of the nationalisation of the people.³⁵ The Fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile described him as 'the highest and truest prophet of the Risorgimento, the Ezekiel of the new Italy'.³⁶ Other Fascist intellectuals credited him with bringing the theme of the nation back to the centre of politics, as it represented 'the reason and [the] ultimate goal of the whole revolutionary action' and the 'absolute and indispensable law of the Italian redemption'.³⁷ Since the origin of their movement, the *camicie nere* had boasted a spiritual connection with the Genovese revolutionary. Thus, they recovered elements of the Mazzinian concept of the nation, which represented the foundations upon which Fascism built its nationalist discourse.

According to PNF intellectuals, the *fil rouge* connecting Fascism with Mazzinianism was the mystical concept of the nation. Both interpreted it as a moral and transcendent entity, which was not limited to a geographical, linguistic and cultural entity but had an authentic spiritual dimension that went beyond liberal individualism.³⁸ This guiding idea was already present in the PNF programme, approved in Florence on 20 December 1921. The cornerstones of the regime were outlined in the short prologue preceding the draft of the programme. Among them, together with the party and the state, there was unquestionably the nation as a 'supreme synthesis of all the ancestry's material and immaterial values'.³⁹ According to party theorists, its essence lay in a 'mysterious and supreme *quid* that summarises life', in a 'divine breath', in an element 'superior to brute matter and pure mechanics'.⁴⁰ Beyond the everyday 'coexistence of individuals in the human crowd', the nation represented 'the most intimate and deep spiritual coexistence'.⁴¹ 'Never done but always *in fieri*', it was not a natural or historical reality, but a free, active and conscious expression of the will of the individual to belong to the life, the history and the destiny of the national community.⁴² The Fascist fatherland was 'not

[...] race, nor geographically identified region' but 'historically perpetuated ancestry, a multitude unified by an idea that is the will of existence and power', 'continuity that embraces centuries, living in the life of countless generations', united by the 'memory of the past' and the 'common anxiety of the future'.⁴³

The voluntaristic element was another dominant aspect of Mazzini's discourse on the nation, which the theorists of Fascism widely retrieved. The following words by the Genovese patriot were particularly dear to the Blackshirts: 'If the soul of the fatherland does not palpitate in that sanctuary of your life called Conscience, it remains like a corpse without motion and breath of creation and you are unnamed crowd, not a nation; folk, not people.'⁴⁴ Mazzini's nation was the synthesis of immanent and transcendent factors, but it would have remained meaningless if it lacked the support of the people. Fascist theorists adopted an idea of the nation as resulting from a deliberate choice of individuals, which recognised and realised themselves in the state as the 'juridical incarnation' of the nation.⁴⁵

The nation was a mission, duty and sometimes sacrifice, to which the people had to be educated.⁴⁶ It was specifically the education of citizens in the love of their homeland that constituted the third cornerstone of Mazzini's thought, embraced by Mussolini's ideologues and representing one of the leitmotifs of their propaganda throughout the *Ventennio*. In the PNF cultural environment, there was a widespread idea that the unified state had emerged as a 'political and juridical form of an insufficient spiritual substance'.⁴⁷ The ideal Risorgimento existed but was an 'immature and discordant' phenomenon that conceived the liberation of Italy from foreign domination superficially and rhetorically.⁴⁸ There is no doubt that it was a great political revolution, but it represented the 'desperate and heroic effort of an intellectual and bourgeois minority' for PNF theorists.⁴⁹ National consciousness did not take form as if by magic, as *Critica fascista* pointed out:

A people who did not fight for a common idea until 1915, who had to face enormous elementary difficulties, who had to solve problems beyond its strengths and lost the sense of political dignity in a secular servitude could not suddenly acquire this sense and that conscience in the aftermath of the Risorgimento.⁵⁰

If Mazzini had failed in ‘redoing the soul’ of Italians after centuries of moral decay, the Blackshirts were determined to carry out their historic task, namely forging the nation and the New Man of the PNF.⁵¹ Fascism preferred ‘the independence of souls and intentions’ to de facto and de jure independence.⁵² Thus, it committed itself to bringing Italy ‘the lymph of a semi-dull and disheartened national tradition’ and creating a ‘nation of people’, solving the tremendous historical problem that was ‘the constant anxiety of patriots and thinkers’.⁵³

In light of the above, a reflection on the relationship between Mazzinianism and Fascism is necessary. Fascism did retrieve the ideas of the Ligurian revolutionary but followed a discontinuous trend, since it picked elements from their original context according to its interest and political convenience. In this sense, for Fascist ideologues, Mazzini was not an apostle ‘in one piece’ but always an apostle in ‘shreds’.⁵⁴ They did not accept his thought as a whole, and discarded elements that they considered useless or unwanted. An example is the total absence of ‘humanitarian Catholicism’ in the Fascist discourse on the nation, which was a recurrent element in the doctrine of the Genovese patriot.⁵⁵ For Mazzini, the struggle for the realisation of national unity assumed a providential meaning, since it represented a mission desired and legitimised by God. This project was ‘a mix of divine wilfulness and popular choice, determinism and freedom’, as Giovanni Belardelli argues.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the formula ‘God and people’ did not fit into Fascism, which was faithful only to the civil creed of the fatherland.⁵⁷ Therefore, if the *camicie nere* embraced the spiritual and mystical interpretation of the Mazzinian nation, they were careful not to include the Christian character that was central to its original formulation.⁵⁸

The appropriation of Mazzinianism by the Blackshirts also passed through the rejection of the democratic ideological component to which it was firmly and indissolubly tied.⁵⁹ Even if the Genovese patriot subordinated freedom to the needs of the community, he never ceased to profess—sometimes contradicting himself—the sacredness of the individual and the inviolability of his interests and rights.⁶⁰ After all, Mazzini grew up and trained within the culture of nineteenth-century European democratic radicalism, which gained no favour among PNF theorists. They attributed to the nation an unquestionably higher value than the freedom of individuals, which was systematically sacrificed to patriotic needs.⁶¹ The individual had no rights except as a member of the national

community that constituted the first condition of citizens' life—inconceivable outside it—and their only source of integral realisation. As the entry 'Fascism' in the *Italian Encyclopaedia of Science, Letters and Arts* indicated:

The man of Fascism is an individual who is nation and fatherland. He is a moral law that holds together individuals and generations in a tradition and a mission that suppresses pleasure to establish a superior life beyond the limits of time and space: a life in which the individual by self-abnegation, the sacrifice of his particular interests and his death, realises that spiritual existence in which lies his value of man.⁶²

As Giovanni Gentile argued, the only possible freedom was freedom within the state.⁶³ He was certainly referring to the newborn Fascist authoritarian state, not to the liberal state that Mussolini had systematically dismantled and that, with all its flaws, resulted from the sacrifice of thousands of women and men who had fought for its unity and independence. Nonetheless, Fascists had little interest in those who saw them as the denial of the Risorgimento spirit. The Blackshirts were convinced of the opposite. As a young *camicia nera* wrote in the *Libro e Moschetto*, the journal of the *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti* (Fascist University Groups or GUF), the 'heroism of the brave and blessed men who fought in Mentana, Curtatone, Custoza and Brescia' was not over but continued.⁶⁴ Taking inspiration from their sacrifice, the 'martyrs of the Fascist Revolution' offered their courage and value for the 'prosperous future of the renewed fatherland that marche[d] confidently and victoriously to run the world'.⁶⁵ Similarly, Camillo Pellizzi stated peremptorily: 'for us, the Risorgimento is a milestone. If there is anti-Risorgimento, it is to be sought not in Fascism but among its opponents.'⁶⁶ According to party exponents, Fascism had not denied the unity and independence of the nation. On the contrary, it strengthened them 'after a parenthesis of tiredness' in Italian history, 'making Mazzini's voice heard again in his deeper meaning'.⁶⁷

The reinvigoration of the people's soul was also the crucial step in realising the *resurgimiento* (resurrection) of the Hispanic nation that was a central topic in Spanish fascist literature as much as it was for the Blackshirts. 'No more falsifications!' wrote José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founder of the Falange Española, which was determined to complete the historical mission of 'returning an authentic national enthusiasm to

Spain'.⁶⁸ The *camisas azules* identified the total debasement of the ideal of the nation as the evil that afflicted society. From the beginning, the moral imperative they fought for was the rebirth of genuinely national consciousness as the only way to revive the 'languid, poor and exhausted life' of the country.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, if the goal of Fascism and Falangism was the same, the historical, political and institutional contexts in which they operated were different.

After gaining power, Mussolini had to rule a recently unified country without a well-established state tradition, in which the nationalisation process of the Italians had just begun, assuming that it had actually started at all. In Spain, on the other hand, Falange ideologues envisioned a grandiose hegemonic project that they wanted to impose on a large unitary state more than four centuries old. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, this state had evolved into a global imperial power thanks to the presence of a consolidated national conscience among the people, although at the dawn of the twentieth century, nothing remained but its memory. Therefore, while the PNF wanted to complete the process that the Risorgimento never concluded and finally give the Italians a national identity, in Spain, the Falangist task was utterly distinct. It was necessary to reverse the negative trend that since the seventeenth century had led the country to ruin and to bring back the nation, which was undoubtedly crippled but unquestionably still alive.

'Reincorporate the people into the nation' and 'reconcile it with tradition' were among the primary goals of the Blueshirts.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the National Syndicalist appeals to a mythical past did not imply any anachronistic conservative intent. As Redondo Ortega noted, 'the problem [was] not rendering respect to the idea of the Hispanic restoration' but 'adapting these doctrinal statements to everyday activity, with certain possibilities of triumph'.⁷¹ The Spanish fascist nation could not duplicate the magnificent Spain of the *Reconquista* (re-conquest), which achieved its national unity under the banner of the Catholic kings and successfully embarked on the conquest of overseas territories. Yet, Falangist ideologues were well aware of how important it was to evoke those legendary times, helping National Syndicalism to legitimise itself and to earn consensus. Hence, they claimed to be the heirs of that golden age and the sole representatives of the nation, which was to live a new epoch of splendour under the insignia of the yoke and arrows of the FE de la JONS after centuries of humiliation.⁷²

National rebirth was closely linked to the palingenesis of Spanish society, which seemed to have lost any point of reference in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and was devoid of direction. Primo de Rivera described this situation as a 'tragedy' since 'Spain lost itself' and was living 'a simulacrum of life that [led] nowhere'.⁷³ According to him, a physical element and a spiritual element needed to coexist to form a fatherland, namely a 'human community of existence' and 'a common destiny', but 'Spain lack[ed] both things'.⁷⁴ For his part, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos noted that 'for two hundred and more years, Spain [was] looking for the best way to die'.⁷⁵ The fascist theorist referred to the descending parabola on which the country had started in the late sixteenth century when Protestantism weakened Spain spiritually and the antagonistic English and French empires exhausted it economically and commercially. Thus, he retraced the stages of that historical period, arguing that 'so great, fast and triumphant was the rise of Spain, so long-lasting was its decline'.⁷⁶

According to the Falangist interpretation, the phase of decay of the nation continued during the entire nineteenth century. Initially, there was the struggle for liberation from the Napoleonic occupation in 1808–14 and the Hispano-American wars of independence that caused the loss of almost all colonies in Central and South America. Later, the Bourbon Restorations of 1814 and 1875 left the country in the hands of a political class considered self-absorbed, with no confidence in the fatherland and the Spaniards. For the *camisas azules*, these events represented the last moments of a tragic drama, leading to the progressive dissolution of the nation and culminating in the Hispano-American war of 1898.⁷⁷ This war ended with the victory of the United States of America over Spain, which had to accept the independence of Cuba and cede Puerto Rico, the island of Guam and the Philippines. This event, which went down in history as *el desastre* (the disaster), not only implied losing the last pieces of the Spanish empire but also intensified all the anguish and frustration that had settled so deeply in Spaniards' souls.

There seemed to be no way to end the catastrophe until nationalism appeared on the political scene and eventually pointed the way forward. In building the Falangist model of the nation, the Blueshirts revived at least partly the discourse on the national collapse and the hopes of a Spanish resurrection that the literary generation of 1898, in particular, had developed. Ismael Saz Campos identifies the modernist regenerationism of the young Miguel de Unamuno, Pío Baroja, Azorín and Ramiro de Maeztu as the most decisive ideological contribution to what

he defines, using Roger Griffin's conceptualisation, as the Spanish 'fascist ultranationalism'.⁷⁸ Similarly to the experience of Italy and other European countries between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these intellectuals believed that invoking the supreme national ideal, which had long been outraged, would stop the downfall of Spanish society. Drawing on reflections of some thinkers belonging to the previous generation and bound to the liberal culture, such as Joaquín Costa, Lucas Mallada and Macías Picavea, the so-called 'modernists' further deepened the regenerationist narrative.⁷⁹ Immersed in the lively social, political and cultural climate that characterised the crisis at the end of the century, they were much more aware than their predecessors of its profound implications for society, which was experiencing a 'wild atomism' and a severe 'mental anaemia'.⁸⁰ The topic of Spanish spiritual misery, so dear to the *noventayochistas* (as the men of the 1898 generation were called), was one of the main aspects of modernist regenerationism that the Falange absorbed entirely in its doctrine. Thus, for instance, in April 1934, José Antonio Primo de Rivera wrote: 'Dull Spain of these days pains us.'⁸¹ Such an expression, so charged with pathos, was far from casual. Rather, it retrieved explicitly a famous sentence that Unamuno used eleven years earlier to express all the pain and suffering for the destiny of the fatherland.⁸²

In the historical reconstruction of the 1898 literary generation, the loss of youth's vital impulse and a genuine spirit of association were the main factors responsible for the national decline.⁸³ As Unamuno wrote, 'a true Spanish fatherland exists when we freely feel the need to be Spanish, when we are all Spanish because we want to be Spanish [...]. Wanting to be something is not resigning oneself to be something.'⁸⁴ The country could overcome the impasse in which it found itself only by regaining its *casticismo*—Spanish pureness—in its *intrahistoria* (inner history).⁸⁵ Crucially, for Unamuno, this implied searching the 'eternal tradition in the present' since the past represented the compass of orientation for today and the future.⁸⁶ Moreover, society should have faced a process of renewal and purification. Spain had to be mystical and spiritual, but also at one and the same time populist, essentialist and 'Castilianist'. This was the model of the nation that inspired the Blueshirts when they began to dream of a 'new Spain' with a definite fascist shape. Nonetheless, as Saz argues, the existence of this ideal connection does not mean that one finds a form of proto-Fascism in the men of the 1898 generation.⁸⁷ While modernists adopted a critical approach to the liberal culture in which they had grown

up and trained, they always remained bound to it. These intellectuals never supported radical authoritarian and breakthrough nationalism, as was the case with Falangism, by contrast.

If 1898 represented a sort of earthquake that hit the country, the social, economic and political turmoil that the Great War caused also touched neutral Spain and conferred on the issue of the nation a centrality that it had never had before. At this stage, solutions further away from the liberal-democratic precepts started to appear. When in August 1917, republicans, socialists and anarcho-syndicalists joined a general strike to overthrow the old oligarchic regime, Spanish conservative sectors presented themselves as defenders of the social order. In their eyes, the fatherland was under threat, which is why they did not hesitate to resort to repressive tools that had little to do with the (at least formally) democratic nature of the political system that the 1876 Constitution outlined.⁸⁸

In this context, organised groups of the right and the extreme right began to emerge. Although more conservative than properly fascist, they shared with Mussolini's movement the authoritarian nature and the use of violence as a 'deeply moral' tool for political struggle.⁸⁹ This was the case of the antiseparatist *Liga Patriótica Española* (Spanish Patriotic League) and the Barcelona civic union *Somatén*, both born in 1919. In 1923, it was the turn of the regenerationist group *La Tropa* and, in 1924, of the Catholic, antidemocratic and corporatist *Unión Patriótica* (Patriotic Union), which provided the basis for civil consent to Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship during the 1920s. Finally, in 1930 the *Unión Monárquica Nacional* (National Monarchic Union) appeared on the Spanish political scene, as well as the *Partido Nacionalista Español* (Spanish Nationalist Party) founded by José María Albiñana.⁹⁰ These organisations can be partly considered the antecedents of Spanish fascism. Nevertheless, it was in the 'prophetic voice' of the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset that the foundations of the Falangist doctrine were laid.⁹¹

As an exponent of an intransigent nationalism of Barresian inspiration, strongly marked by the decadentist theory of the end of the nineteenth century, Ortega y Gasset adopted the Nietzschean pessimism that characterised the literary generation of '98 and brought it to the highest levels.⁹² Evoking the image of defeat when asserting that 'Spain [was] destroying itself', he expressed all his disappointment with a society in which disintegrating impulses overwhelmed the anarchist and undisciplined masses.⁹³ At the same time, he could not hold back his anger with

Spain, which was not able to be a nation and to impose itself as a community because it did not have a great purpose to pursue.⁹⁴ Starting from a Castilianist and essentialist position, Ortega y Gasset—like the *noventay-ochoistas*—hoped for the regeneration of Spain through the rehabilitation and the strong re-launch of the national ideal. The nation that he had in mind, with certain mystical features, represented a ‘*quid divinum*’ that realised itself in a ‘suggestive project of a life in common’.⁹⁵ With this expression, the philosopher indicated a collective mission to be accomplished both within and outside Spanish territorial boundaries. It should be a historic feat that would act as the glue for the community and counter the threat of separatism, which was dividing the country into a ‘series of watertight compartments’.⁹⁶ On this point, Ortega y Gasset noted:

We must repudiate the static interpretation of the national coexistence and understand it dynamically. People do not live together without reason. That type of cohesion a priori exists only in the family. Groups that integrate the state live together for something. They are a community of purpose, of desires, of high profit. They do not live together only *to stay* together, but *to do* something together. [...] It is not yesterday, the past, the traditional, the decisive thing for a nation to exist. [...] Nations are born and live because they have a programme for tomorrow.⁹⁷

In order to realise the project of nationalisation of the Spanish people and institutions, Ortega y Gasset did not hesitate to take up positions that were unorthodox from a liberal-cultural point of view. First, he legitimised the use of arms as ‘spiritual force’ and ‘great historical surgery’, which crucially contributed to the ‘divine inspiration [...] that the creative and imperial people have’.⁹⁸ Moreover, he revealed a certain contempt for the masses, which he considered anarchist and rebellious by nature. Their salvation should come to pass only through their realisation in the nation and thanks to the guidance of an exemplary select minority. The latter was to lead the process of national rebirth since, for the philosopher, it was exactly people’s poor docility and the ‘absence of the “best”’ that were responsible for the ‘pathology’ of the fatherland.⁹⁹

Ortega y Gasset’s considerations did not contain intrinsically fascist elements, although they were more openly critical of the liberal theory than the 1898 generation. Nonetheless, the Spanish writer’s ideas proved adaptable to a more authoritarian interpretation over time. Between the

late 1920s and the early 1930s, he became of great interest to some intellectuals who had begun to approach fascism. First among them was Ernesto Giménez Caballero.¹⁰⁰ A member of the literary avant-garde and an admirer of Mussolini's Italy, which he visited on a trip in 1928, he is considered the prophet of Spanish fascism and one of the first participants in what Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro defined as the Spanish-Italian fascist network.¹⁰¹ As Ortega y Gasset's pupil, he developed his mentor's thought in a more anti-liberal sense. He promoted a vitalist, audacious and imperialist nationalism that defended the Catholic tradition insofar as it represented the Latin and imperial tradition of Rome, culminating in fascism.¹⁰² His influence on some Jonsist and Falangist theorists before and after their fusion in the FE de las JONS was remarkable.¹⁰³ For instance, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, following Giménez Caballero's example, re-read in a fascist sense the theories of Ortega y Gasset. In 1935, the founder of the Falange wrote that 'a generation which almost aroused the Spanish anxiety under the sign of Ortega y Gasset ha[d] tragically imposed upon itself the mission of vertebrate Spain'.¹⁰⁴ Adopting the ideas of the philosopher of Madrid, Primo de Rivera restored a central role to the national ideal that, using again an Orteguian expression, only an 'excellent minority'—which he identified in the Falangists—could have achieved.¹⁰⁵ In so doing, José Antonio became the spokesman for what he called 'missional nationalism' and claimed in the famous expression '*unidad de destino en lo universal*' ('unity of destiny in the universal') the frankly genuine character of the Spanish nation.¹⁰⁶

Inspired by the Orteguian notion of a 'suggestive project of a life in common', José Antonio did not introduce a new element into the ideology of the Blueshirts but undoubtedly gave it a centrality it had never had until then.¹⁰⁷ The concept of *unidad de destino en lo universal* was part of the initial plan of the Falange Española in December 1933 and became the second of the 27 programme points of the FE de las JONS in November of the following year.¹⁰⁸ With this expression, the Falangists traced the nation back to a harmony of purpose. It was a 'historical permanence', as Ramiro Ledesma Ramos defined it, namely a high feat that would unite all Spaniards in future as it had done in the past.¹⁰⁹ Similarly to Ortega y Gasset and the Italian Fascists, National Syndicalist theorists and leaders rejected the romantic concept of the nation that based its mystical connotations on mere physical factors. Thus, José Antonio asserted that a people is 'not a nation by any physical justification, local colours or flavours' but because it has 'a destiny that is different from

the destiny of the other nations'.¹¹⁰ For him, 'not every people [...] is a nation but only the one that fulfils a historical destiny differentiated in the universal'.¹¹¹

Religion was among the characteristics that determined the uniqueness of the historical destiny of Spain. Since the eighth century, Christianity had played a central role in the long process of *Reconquista* of the Iberian territories from the invasion of the Moors, which culminated in the expulsion of the last Nasrid Sultan of Granada, Muhammad XII, in January 1492. Conventionally, 1492 represents the birth date of the Spanish nation-state; not by chance were its founders and first sovereigns the Catholic Monarchs Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon.¹¹² Modern Spain, resulting from a liberation mission from Muslim attackers, arose with a clear Catholic connotation that Falangist intellectuals could not certainly ignore.¹¹³ This does not mean that Spanish fascism was a confessional movement. As Giovanni Gentile stressed with reference to Italy, it was impossible for the Fascist totalitarian state to be Catholic, given its originality with respect to other religions and philosophies. Similarly, in 1932, Redondo Ortega declared that Jonsist nationalism, being totalitarian, could not represent any faction, not even the country's main religious group.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, he noted that Spanish fascism could not be associated with any creed for two reasons. First, it would have been illogical to raise the flag of religion since National Syndicalism systematically resorted to violence as a legitimate tool of political struggle. Moreover, by assuming a confessional configuration, it would antagonise most of the masses of workers that the Blueshirts wanted to wrest from the control of Marxist, atheist and anti-national organisations.¹¹⁵

Moving from an even more intransigent position, in 1935, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos highlighted that, during the Second Republic, Catholicism had become a divisive element.¹¹⁶ He highlighted that the priority of Spanish fascism was the realisation of the greatness of the nation, not the salvation of humankind. 'National morals' that everyone had to follow and 'religious morals' were not in conflict but nevertheless they were not the same thing.¹¹⁷ They constituted two separate plans and must remain such, as the FE de las JONS programmatic rules of 1934 set out. In particular, the twenty-fifth point of the party programme established the kind of relationships that should have existed between the Falangist state and the Church. The party would have to incorporate the Catholic sentiment 'of glorious tradition and predominant in Spain' in the process of regeneration of the homeland. This, in part, reflected José Antonio's

Catholic education.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Church could not interfere in state affairs or carry out any activity that could have diminished national integrity.¹¹⁹

The attitude of the Falange towards the Church was in many respects similar to that of the PNF. The religion of Spaniards, like the religion of Italians, was Catholicism. In both cases, opposing it would amount to political suicide since it would mean losing the sympathy of the majority of the population.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, beyond mere calculations of political expediency, there was a significant difference between the two countries. In Italy, state unification took place not only without the participation of the Church but also in the face of its clear opposition. The Catholic community—following the *non expedit* of Pope Pius IX in 1868—did not participate in the political life of the state until 1913 when, after the conclusion of the Gentiloni Pact, it went to the polls in the autumn elections of the same year for the first time. Conversely, Catholicism in Spain played a fundamental role in the birth and consolidation of the nation-state founded by the Catholic Kings at the end of the fifteenth century. The Falangists, who proclaimed themselves the heirs of that mythic nation, had to deal with that reality and could do nothing beyond incorporating, at least partly, the religious element in their ideological universe.¹²¹

When the Civil War began and anticlerical persecutions increased in republican territories—giving to the conflict the sense of a *cruzada* (crusade)—the National Syndicalist abstract projects finally found a great opportunity for realisation.¹²² The Blueshirts saw in the 1936–39 fratricidal fight the cathartic event that was to release the vital energies of authentic Spain after centuries of indolence. In this context, violence would fulfil a purifying and therapeutic function. Inspired by Ortega y Gasset once again, the Falangists conceived it not a ‘brute force but a spiritual force’ that had an ‘auxiliary’ role ‘in the great processes of national incorporation’, as it had been for the Blackshirts with the Great War.¹²³

Once again, symmetry between the two fascisms emerges, further strengthening the hypothesis of the absolute centrality of the nation in the ideological universe of both political cultures. More precisely, as Roger Griffin suggests, it is appropriate to talk about the ‘ultra-nation’, the prefix ‘ultra’ indicating the hyper exaltation of the concept of the fatherland, in this case, by Fascists and Falangists who rejected ‘any humanistic and egalitarian connotations’ attached to it.¹²⁴ The Blackshirts and the Blueshirts idealised the nation to the extent that they frequently ‘reified’ it, and

referred to it as a living entity.¹²⁵ For them, it represented not a 'simple organisation but a true biological organism', 'endowed with its own consciousness and will' and 'consisting of parts [the individuals] having functions harmoniously interconnected'.¹²⁶ According to this organicist interpretation, the nation is born, evolves and deteriorates, but it can also heal and regenerate. Before the alleged state of crisis experienced by the fatherland, Fascism and National Syndicalism wanted to carry out the palingenesis process of their respective ultra-nations whereby the latter would rise to new life through the mobilisation of the energies of the Italian and Spanish peoples, following the precepts of the revolutionary doctrines of the PNF and the Falange.¹²⁷

In formulating their narrative on the decline of the fatherland and the need for its rebirth, the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* re-elaborated nineteenth-century nationalist thought in a very similar way. Notably, they added to it a pragmatic, radically revolutionary and strictly anti-liberal component that had been missing until then. However, the timing was different. In Italy, a first Fascist response to the problem of the nation appeared following the Great War, when it was no longer possible to stem the change that was affecting society. In Spain, this response came during the 1930s when the political and social turmoil that had been contained—even if with difficulty—during Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship re-emerged with disruptive effects.

Once Fascism and Falangism appeared on the political scenes of their respective countries, they celebrated themselves as the legitimate heirs of the purest national tradition and outlined their plan for national resurrection. In both cases, their nation would arise from the civic education of citizens, which would eventually lead to the 'realisation of the people in the state' Costamagna hoped for and to the birth of that 'unitary sense of the people' Beneyto Pérez invoked.¹²⁸ However, before starting to build their nations in positive terms, Fascists and Falangists committed themselves to clearing the field of all obstacles to its implementation. For them, this meant undertaking a systematic moral and physical elimination of all those who opposed their projects. Precisely because these individuals believed in a different idea of the homeland than the one formulated by the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts, the Italian and Spanish fascists denounced them as 'anti-nationals' and enemies of the nation, and fought them mercilessly.

CRUSHING THE ‘ANTI-NATION:’ THE *PARS* *DESTRUENS* OF FASCIST NATIONALISM¹²⁹

On 26 January 1939, from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia, Benito Mussolini addressed the crowd gathered in the square below to celebrate ‘the entrance of the nationals’ led by Francisco Franco in Barcelona as follows:

The shout of your legitimate exultation merges with the shout rising from all the cities of Spain now wholly free from the Reds’ infamy, and with the shout of the anti-Bolsheviks from all over the world. The bright victory of Barcelona is another chapter in the history of the new Europe we are creating. Franco’s magnificent troops and our intrepid legionnaires did not defeat only Negrín’s government. Many others among our enemies are biting the dust right now. The Reds’ watchword was ‘*No pasarán*’, but we passed and, I am telling you, we will pass.¹³⁰

The surrender of the Catalan city, one of the last strongholds of the *Frente Popular* (Popular Front), represented a terrific victory both for the Spanish nationalists and the Duce of Italian Fascism. Its importance was threefold. It rewarded the efforts of the Blackshirts of the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* (Corps of Volunteer Troops) since the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in favour of the *Alzamiento Nacional* (National Uprising). It was the payback for the stinging setback that Mario Roatta’s militias had suffered in Guadalajara in March 1937.¹³¹ Above all, it was the triumph of the real Spanish nation, with a definite fascist shape, over the ‘anti-nation’ of the filo-socialist and liberal-republican governments.

Mussolini’s speech was genuinely paradigmatic since it highlighted a central element in the ideology of both the PNF and the Falange, namely the fierce struggle against the ‘anti-national enemy’ until its annihilation. This was a political constant in the two fascisms, referring to a joint historical mission dramatised in the extreme by the Italian and Spanish fascisms. From the very beginning of the two movements, the campaign against the anti-nationals was merciless warfare, whose intensity changed over time in inverse proportion to the increase of popular support for Fascism and Falangism. In Italy, when the movement took its first steps in the country’s political scene and during the first phase of stabilisation of the regime, attention to the enemies of the homeland predominated, absorbing the energies of the PNF. During the period of maximum consolidation of the dictatorship, when it seemed that the regime had

eliminated all opposition, emphasis on the internal opponents decreased. It increased again during particularly adverse circumstances, such as the tragic period of the Italian Civil War in 1943–45.¹³²

In Spain, the fascist struggle against the anti-nationals had its forerunner in the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista in the early 1930s. However, it was the Civil War—fought by the ‘crusaders’ of the nationalist troops for the salvation of the fatherland—that represented ‘the greatest nationalising and denationalising episode of the Spaniards’.¹³³ The fight of the Spanish nation against the ‘anti-Spain’ became the flag not only of the FE de las JONS—which during the conflict became an armed militia and the mass party of the nationalist front—but also of the whole Francoist formation.¹³⁴ It decreased partially after the victory of the Generalísimo in 1939, and even more with the *camisas azules*’ diminished influence in the government between spring 1941 and summer 1942. These events sanctioned the failure of the ‘appropriation of Spain and the fatherland’ by the party, which merged with the traditionalists in April 1937, changing its name to *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (FET de las JONS).¹³⁵ With this change, the progressive reconfirmation of the Christian roots of the regime and ‘the resulting total identification between the homeland and Catholicism’ ratified the end of the project of a Spanish fascist state on the Italian model.¹³⁶ Moreover, it implied the dominance of the other main political culture in Francoism—National Catholicism—and ‘a considerable reduction of the patriotic lexicon’.¹³⁷

The fact that the PNF and the Falange failed to complete their plans of ‘integral fascistisation’ of the fatherland does not diminish the role of the war between the ‘two Italys’ and ‘two Spains’ that fought each other within state boundaries in the process of creating a national identity according to Fascists and Falangists.¹³⁸ In a similar way, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts exploited the legitimate and cohesive potential of the nation, monopolised it and interpreted it fascistically. The consequence of this operation was the same in both countries. They discriminated between Italians and Spaniards who held differing views of the nation and its founding values. Thinking of the nation in different terms from those of the PNF and the Falange constituted a betrayal and implied the exclusion of the reprobates from the state community physically and morally.¹³⁹ The clash—as the two political cultures configured it ideologically—was a struggle for liberation from opponents who were perceived as foreigners at home and deprived of their status as citizens. Before forging

the New Man through rigorous fascist education, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts were determined to wipe out all those who constituted a threat to their plans. This is why, in a first phase, the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* defined their nation in negative terms, with all that it was not, and the Fascist and Falangist nation was certainly not a synonym for liberalism or socialism.¹⁴⁰

From the beginning, Italian and Spanish fascisms built their political fortunes by presenting themselves as the bulwark against the spread of these two adversaries. For the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts, the essential anti-national character of liberalism lay in the exclusive domain of the bourgeoisie it legitimised. In their interpretation, instead of a formally representative state, it created a 'mono-class' state that ignored the social demands of the lower classes.¹⁴¹ Such a state was also responsible for an articulated network of corruption based on a solid crony structure, clearly indicating the inability of the liberal political class to make the government work in an authentic democratic way. According to PNF theorists, the most glaring symbol of this system, which they judged both corrupt and corrupting, was the institution of Parliament. They considered it the epidemic illness of the Italian political organism and the particular instrument of the Giolittian 'bourgeois oligarchy', which promised with 'demagogic perfidy' to fight for the greatness of the people but governed for the 'favours of the clientele' instead.¹⁴² For their part, Falangist intellectuals accused Manuel Azaña's government of being the heir to the Spanish tradition of *caciquismo* and committing all sorts of unpleasantness.¹⁴³ Most of all, the National Syndicalists blamed it for being responsible for the vortex of radicalisation into which the country had fallen. The Second Republic turned out to be incompetent and unable to satisfy the demand for social justice coming from the—mainly peasant—population, which was exploding in increasingly violent forms.¹⁴⁴

For both Italian and Spanish fascisms, the liberal state was a synonym for division, certainly not for the nation. The roots of the national disintegration originated in late nineteenth-century rationalist culture and, specifically, in the individualistic theory of which liberal democracy was a manifestation. Following the interpretation of PNF theorists, man at the centre of life was 'the basic error of the materialistic philosophical thought' and the main character of disunity in modern civilisation.¹⁴⁵ His 'hyperbolic affirmation' transformed the state into a mere instrument for the protection of civil rights and negative freedoms of individuals.¹⁴⁶

It deprived citizens of superior leadership and, even worse, it obfuscated the supreme reality of the nation. Based on these assumptions, Italian Fascists denounced the dramatic antithesis between the 'false Italy' of the executive elite and the 'real Italy' of the people gathered in the squares. The care of national interests seemed to give way to the ambition of men to the point that politics became a 'curriculum of parliamentary professionalism' and an exaltation of the 'superstition of the majority'.¹⁴⁷

Similarly, Spanish fascists condemned the republican government for only being interested in producing laws and speculating on the individual abstractedly. As a result, the 'national genius' had become just an 'issue of numbers'.¹⁴⁸ The liberal state lacked ideal impulse. It was not 'the resolute executor of patriotic destinies' but 'the spectator of electoral fights'.¹⁴⁹ The political life of the country had been reduced to the 'farce of the ballots in a glass urn' that decided 'at any instant if God existed or did not exist, if the truth was the truth or not the truth, if the fatherland had to live or if it had to commit suicide'.¹⁵⁰ According to the National Syndicalist interpretation, in such a 'turbulent and unpleasant life' the social connective tissue and the bond of brotherhood between citizens suffered a deep laceration such as had never been seen before in the history of the country.¹⁵¹ What emerged in the ideological reconstruction of the Falangist intellectuals was the drama of a 'sectarian and rancorous' politics that was inaugurated on 14 April 1931 and founded on a constitution that gave a 'legal semblance to the most anti-national state that Spain ever had'.¹⁵²

According to PNF and Falange ideologues, the clear separation between a 'legal country' and a 'real country' ended up facilitating the appearance of another intrinsically anti-national political actor, namely maximalist socialism. The inability of the liberal political class to integrate the masses into the state favoured Bolshevism, which was beginning to make its way to Italy and Spain. Mussolini and the Fascist leaders dragged Giolitti to the dock for this. They blamed him not only for betraying the national cause by embracing neutrality on the eve of the Great War but also for having tried to include the Socialist Party in the government. It is widely acknowledged that pressure from the maximalist wing of the party forced PSI leader Filippo Turati to reject the invitation, but this was not enough to mitigate the political hatred that the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* had for the Piedmontese statesman. Under no circumstances, they would have accepted Giolitti's opening to the Socialist Party,

which they considered a deplorable choice and another step towards the disintegration of the nation.

In the Blackshirts' interpretation, the liberal state was sitting by and watching the PSI advance. The overwhelming victory of the latter in the 1919 elections and the events of the 'red biennium'—interpreted by the Duce as a 'criminal attempt to *caporettese* Italy'—corroborated that conviction.¹⁵³ The climate of tension and violence made it seem as though the country was on the brink of a civil war. Although Bolshevism had never seemed as threatening as in those years, Giolitti limited himself to reporting the dispute in the trade union field, hoping that his attempt to resolve it within the framework of the parliamentary debate would have been sufficient to return to normality. De facto, the divisions within the PSI and the emergence of anti-socialist blocs in the autumn 1920 administrative elections created optimum conditions for a re-launch of Fascist action. Taking advantage of the favourable situation, the leaders of the provincial Fascist squads set off a large-scale offensive which even the signing of the Pacification Pact on 2 August 1921 could not stop.¹⁵⁴

In Spain, the victory of the republican-socialist coalition in the elections of 12 April 1931 raised concerns that the new institutional order was being accompanied by the Bolshevik revolution. While the socialists in Italy always adopted specific revolutionary positions, which prevented any agreement with the bourgeois-democratic forces for fear that a proletarian dictatorship might arise, things worked differently in Spain. There, liberals and socialists found common ground in the struggle against the oligarchy of the old Spain, and in supporting the republican cause. The victory of the *Comité Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Committee)—composed of republicans, the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party or PSOE), the liberal-republican right, and Catalan and Galician republican formations—represented a turning point in the history of the country. Once Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship had ended and the monarchy had been set aside for having colluded with it, there was not merely a transition from one regime to another but 'a march towards the complete national dissolution' in the eyes of anti-republicans.¹⁵⁵ As Onésimo Redondo Ortega wrote, the struggle configured itself 'fatally' as a 'reciprocal elimination: Spain or the anti-Spain'.¹⁵⁶

The irreconcilable quarrel between socialists, on the one hand, and Italian and Spanish fascists, on the other hand, had to do with two anti-thetical ways of understanding the political community. Both Italian and

Spanish fascists opposed socialism for representing a threat to the integrity of the nation. They accused it of fomenting the most extreme class antagonism by instigating the working class to fight, and championing the cause of a universal proletariat in which states and social distinctions would no longer exist. Socialism saw the nation as the mere territorial context for the battle of the proletarians to gain power and affirm their supremacy, and sacrificed it on the altar of internationalism. In the eyes of PNF and Falange ideologues, such a doctrine nipped in the bud any possibility of synthesis between the nation and socialism, in so doing confirming the deeply anti-systemic nature of the latter.¹⁵⁷

In Italy, the Fascist struggle against socialist strongholds started at the beginning of the movement when, as Mussolini asserted, the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* 'declare[d] war on socialism not as socialist, but because it was against the nation'.¹⁵⁸ This struggle reached a pivotal point when the Blackshirts met the agrarians, who fiercely fought the cooperatives and municipal socialism for appropriating their space.¹⁵⁹ The alliance took shape during the administrative elections in October–November 1920 when the socialists—after their incredible success at the 1919 political elections—won the majority of the seats in many municipalities and provincial councils.¹⁶⁰ Agrarians and Fascists had taken action and organised expeditions to hit 'red' municipalities as they were a 'sort of Italian version of the Soviets'.¹⁶¹ Under these circumstances, it was impossible to imagine any involvement of the PSI in government. This would have meant leaving the field open to a 'devastating struggle between the classes, whose consortium [was] the foundation of the national society'.¹⁶² The Fascists presented their reorganising and reconstructive force at the service of the national community as opposed to the 'irresponsible Bolshevik action' at the service of a foreign power.¹⁶³ Thus, the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*, first, and the PNF, later, promised to serve the national state and its values rather than any social class. They declared that they would raise the flag of the fatherland again and established a radically new political order in its name.¹⁶⁴

Like their Italian colleagues, Spanish fascists accused the socialists of spreading the germs of the dissolution in the country, prostrating themselves at the feet of the Soviet enemy. The Blueshirts, as well as all conservative forces in Spain at the time, perceived the period from 1931 to 1933 as authentically revolutionary and characterised by radical changes in the political, social and economic structure of the state. They saw the republican-socialist coalition governments that succeeded one

another in that ‘terrible biennium’ as the anteroom of hell.¹⁶⁵ According to National Syndicalists, the PSOE was principally responsible for the nation’s misfortunes. Headed by the ‘Spanish Lenin’ Francisco Largo Caballero, it held the majority of seats in Parliament and controlled several critical ministries. The period of the governments led by the *Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas* (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups or CEDA) in 1933–35 was dismissed as the ‘stupid biennium’ due to its lack of direction.¹⁶⁶ For the *camisas azules*, it only served to pave the way for the victory of the Popular Front in February 1936, which brought to power the worst possible anti-national coalition including the PSOE, the *Partido Comunista Español* (Spanish Communist Party), the republican leftists, and the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista* (Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification).

The electoral success of the Popular Front gave new impetus to the Falangist fears, which were later reflected in Francisco Franco’s entire front. The outbreak of the Civil War radicalised the National Syndicalist positions, together with those of the Spanish conservative right. From 18 July 1936, the labour and republican parties, regardless of the differences between them, were vilified as ‘servants of Russian imperialism and lackeys of Stalin’s designs’.¹⁶⁷ Especially after the formation of the socialist governments of Largo Caballero in September 1936 and Juan Negrín in May 1937, the Blueshirts accused them of selling out Spain to Bolshevik tyranny. Concern about massive Soviet interference in the country was well founded. At that time, Moscow not only provided arms and military advisers to the republicans but also held Spanish gold reserves as a ‘pledge’ in exchange for international protection by the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁸ For that reason, the Blueshirts were more determined than ever before to fight the inner enemies of the fatherland. After all, as Mussolini wrote, ‘the human beast [was] always the same, whether it [was] [...] a Russian *ghepenù* or a Spanish militiaman’.¹⁶⁹ Besides, for the Falangists, socialism undermined the territorial and spiritual unity of the country by supporting the additional anti-national causes of regionalisms and secularism. On the one hand, the PSOE was showing benevolence and support for those who served the ‘particular ambitions of politicians and regional traffickers who [complicated] the problem of autonomies with blasphemous breaths of separatism’.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, the socialists were leading the atheist struggle against the Catholic Church

that was ‘one of the historical essences of the *españolidad* (Spanishness)’.¹⁷¹ Their ultimate goal was to eliminate its presence from society, often resorting to persecution and vindictive methods.

The text of the republican constitution approved on 9 December 1931, which the *camisas azules* hastily dismissed as the efforts of a minority to build an anti-Spanish state, seemed to put all this on paper. It recognised broad administrative autonomy for the regions and conceded statutes of self-government, as happened in Catalonia in 1932. It established a clear separation between the state and the Church, a drastic reduction of ecclesiastical privileges and the nationalisation of Church property. It guaranteed freedom of worship and sanctioned the dissolution of religious orders that vowed obedience to an authority other than the state. It also legitimised civil marriage and divorce as well as expropriations for reasons of social utility. Not least, it laid the foundations for social legislation that provided, among other measures, for the direct participation of workers in the management and benefits of companies. For National Syndicalist ideologues, it represented a sort of ideological manifest of anti-Spanish ideals. In it, the tools of ‘liberal-parliamentary candour’ merged with the most subversive socialist principles to sow seeds of discord, debasing the most intimate national feeling.¹⁷² According to the Falangists, the country was in the dangerous tight grip of liberalism on one side and Bolshevism on the other. Thus, they saw no choice but to ‘mercilessly wipe out the internal accomplices, whether they were purple or red, who have assaulted or planned to assault [...] the spiritual fort’ of the fatherland to ‘deliver the nation, reduced to dust, to hidden masters’.¹⁷³

Significantly, among these ‘hidden masters’, both Italian and Spanish fascists included freemasonry, which completes the list of main anti-national opponents. At different times, freemasonry was associated with both the liberal regime and socialism, with whom it shared a potentially disintegrating and anti-systemic character. Drawing from a historical interpretation of the masonic lodges, the PNF and the Falange considered them a severe threat. They supposedly plotted in the shadows to control the vital organs of the state and, for this reason, they had to be counteracted with appropriate measures.

Italian Law no. 2029 of 26 November 1925, known as the ‘Law on secret societies’, served this purpose. It established the dismissal of all civil servants and military agents of every order and rank who belonged to organisations operating clandestinely, even partly, whether inside or outside the kingdom.¹⁷⁴ The reference to ‘that great criminal conspiracy

and forge of high treasons that was freemasonry' was explicit, even if the lodges in Italy were not a real danger.¹⁷⁵ According to the data reported by the Minister of Grace, Justice and Religious Affairs, Alfredo Rocco, the number of freemasons was no more than 20,000 in 1925.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, it must be noted that Fascism itself embraced anti-masonic prejudice—dear to Italian nationalism—with some difficulty. This is particularly true considering that Raul Palermi's Grand Lodge of Piazza del Gesù nominated Mussolini mason of the 33rd degree (the highest of the masonic hierarchical pyramid) and awarded him the title of Honorary Grand Master in January 1923. Furthermore, this lodge, together with Domizio Torregiani's lodge, not only favoured the rise of Fascism with financial contributions but also boasted prominent figures of the Movimento Sansepolcrista among its members.¹⁷⁷

Fascism assumed a clear anti-masonic position at the fourth meeting of the Grand Council on 15 February 1923. From that moment, party theorists began to warn against the Grand Orient's power, spreading within the peninsula like a disease, attacking the healthy body of the fatherland and weakening the PNF authority from the inside. Freemasonry 'was clinging to the state and, in a thousand ways, was binding it and dominating it'.¹⁷⁸ Thus, the struggle against secret associations, or 'hidden hierarch[ies]' as Rocco defined them, constituted a relentless fight to defend the nation.¹⁷⁹ Once Italy obtained its independence from an alien power 'at such a price and at such a price maintained' it, it was inconceivable that the nation could again be a victim of political manoeuvres orchestrated by clandestine organisations linked to foreign headquarters.¹⁸⁰ For this reason, in punishing secret associationism, the members of the lodges were subject to the incontestable judgement of the *Tribunale Speciale per la Difesa dello Stato* (Special for the Defence of the State), which was in charge of assessing political crimes against the Fascist nation and the regime specifically.¹⁸¹

Analogously, Falangist theorists embraced and strengthened the theory of masonic conspiracy, exploiting its enormous potential for legitimisation/delegitimisation from the early stages of their movement. In January 1933, the Jonsist Onésimo Redondo Ortega denounced freemasonry's strongly secular and 'foreign' character, which was alien to the national historical tradition. In his assessment, the liberal state, Marxism and the republic represented 'imported goods that the masonic lodges and the insurgent Internationals recommended to impose upon the nation some myths and laws that [deformed] it'.¹⁸² Two years later, José Antonio

Primo de Rivera, speaking of anti-national politics in 1931–33, highlighted how Spain had become a colony of freemasonry. Thus, he legitimised the use of force against that ‘triumphant sect, [that was] seeder of discord, denier of the national continuity and obedient to foreign orders’.¹⁸³ Working on the same premise, Ramiro Ledesma Ramos denounced ‘secret and exotic’ freemasonry for jeopardising ‘the national interests, peace and the public order’ and for diffusing an anti-Spanish propaganda abroad.¹⁸⁴

The intensity with which Spanish Fascists conducted this campaign even before the Alzamiento gave renewed vigour to the anti-masonic radicalism of Franco and his army during the years of the Civil War.¹⁸⁵ This meant that a robust Falangist influence was underlying the normative measures that were adopted during the conflict and in its aftermath to annihilate lodges as secret associations and enemies of the nation. Censorship hit them along with the Popular Front and trade unions, and they were officially banned under the Law of Political Responsibilities of 9 February 1939.¹⁸⁶ The legislation targeted parties and groups that had contributed to creating or aggravating subversion of the Spanish order and all those who had opposed the nationalists ‘with concrete acts or serious passivity’.¹⁸⁷

A new law, promulgated on 1 March 1940, intensified persecution. It affected secret societies and international forces of a ‘clandestine nature’—essentially freemasonry and seditious organisations associated with it—as part of international communism.¹⁸⁸ These were presumably responsible for all the tragedies that were devastating the life of the nation: from the war of independence to the loss of the colonial empire, from the fall of the constitutional monarchy to the ‘terrible atheistic, materialist, anti-militarist and anti-Spanish campaign’ that spread ‘the most atrocious slander against true Spain’ during the 1930s.¹⁸⁹ As in the Italian Fascist regime, a Special Tribunal was established to judge suspected affiliates of freemasonry. According to Article 10 of the new law, this tribunal also had the discretion to award ‘absolving justifications’ for individual merits linked to participation in the nationalist cause.¹⁹⁰ Among them, support for the Falange ended up as a parameter identifying a good citizen. Its absence, on the other hand, was a discriminating factor for assigning the black mark of anti-national Spaniard. Such a disposition offers a further clue to the importance that the National Syndicalist project of nationalisation of the people had until the early 1940s. Although the regime never granted Falangists appropriate room for manoeuvre to imprint a

‘genuinely fascist direction’ in the country, the rewards under Article 10 reflect the Blueshirts’ profuse efforts to affiliate the Falange with the true homeland once again.¹⁹¹

In a comparative perspective, by monopolising the ideal of the fatherland, the *camisas azules* and the *camicie nere* conceptualised the image of the anti-national enemy in a very similar way, often dehumanising it for its violence and cowardice. The relevance of this mechanism of appropriation lies in the fact that it was not just an abstract construction of some theorists but was turned into concrete political actions. Once Fascism and Falangism had excluded not only ideologically but also physically any other way of conceiving membership in the national community, they became the nation, or at least, so party ideologues believed. From that moment on, it was evident that the nation could no longer be described only in ‘anti’ terms. Thus, the PNF and the Falange channelled their energies into realising their most ambitious goal: giving their respective nations an original and distinctive fascist imprint.

FROM THEORY TO FACTS: IMPLEMENTING THE FASCIST AND FALANGIST NATIONS

As the Fascist intellectual Roberto Pavese emphasised, ‘it is not a party but a nation the movement that fights and defeats the enemies of the nation itself’.¹⁹² Once the anti-Italy and the anti-Spain were out of play, a new political season dawned in which the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts discussed the topic of the nation not only in negative terms. When Fascists and Falangists invaded the political scene of their respective countries, the nation they dreamed of had some shared features. It was anti-decadentist, anti-positivist, anti-materialist, anti-rationalist, anti-liberal, anti-socialist and anti-masonic. Nevertheless, as the two-time Secretary of the Falange José Luis de Arrese stated, ‘the “antis” are always negative, and the people triumph only when they oppose the idea that destroys the idea that constructs it’.¹⁹³ In the complex process of the ideological definition of the nation that the two fascisms undertook, the purely critical and reactionary phase signified an essential but transient step. It preceded the much more crucial stage of positive construction of the national identity that PNF and Falange theorists interpreted in a totalitarian sense.

After gaining power, Italian Fascism—which was a ‘sum of infinite negations’ in the period 1920–21—acquired a more defined identity.¹⁹⁴ Certainly, there were also moments of dissent within the movement, as

the internal debate that took place after the signing of the ‘treaty of appeasement’ with the socialists on 3 August 1921 demonstrated. In an article published in *Il Popolo d’Italia*, Mussolini declared that the covenant served ‘the cause of humanity, the cause of the nation, the cause of Fascism’.¹⁹⁵ Calling to order those who, like Dino Grandi, interpreted the agreement with the PSI as a ‘trap’ that erased the ideal heritage of the Blackshirts’ struggle, the Duce urged them to give up factional interests.¹⁹⁶ Thus, he stated the movement’s priority unequivocally: ‘Fascism [saw] the nation, and then all the rest.’¹⁹⁷ If Fascism had identified itself with the fatherland from the beginning, from that moment onwards, it did everything it could to appropriate it concretely.¹⁹⁸ As Emilio Gentile argued, the ideal of the ‘Fascists’ homeland’ replaced the ideal of the ‘Italians’ homeland’, which was the guiding principle of Risorgimento and the post-unity governments despite all its limitations.¹⁹⁹ Only the Blackshirts benefited from the status of authentic Italians, while those who did not embrace the PNF belief received different treatment as ‘excommunicated and renegade’.²⁰⁰

The speech of 3 January 1925 that ratified the dictatorial turn of Mussolini’s government officially started this process of denationalisation of the anti-Fascists, which was publicised through the promulgation of the ‘laws of defence’ in 1925–26. Under this legislation, the regime distinguished between national and anti-national Italians, and legitimised the expulsion from the community of those ‘anthropologically incompatible’ with the new Fascist Italy.²⁰¹ The *Discorso dell’Ascensione* speech of 26 May 1927 set out the guiding principles of this discriminatory policy. On that occasion, the Duce addressed the issue of the exiled countrymen, affirming that the regime’s policy towards these individuals rested not on ‘terror’ but simply on ‘rigour’.²⁰² Fascism did nothing except to provide measures of ‘social hygiene’ and ‘national prophylaxis’.²⁰³ As the Duce stressed, the Fascist revolution had to defend itself and it did so efficaciously. There was no room for any kind of political dialectics in Italy after the mid-1920s.

Setting aside its peremptoriness, Mussolini’s judgement of the anti-national front reduced to ‘dust’ is significant for this work.²⁰⁴ Since the opposition had been silenced, a new political season began, in which the identification between Fascism and the nation no longer had the symbolic-ideal character of the past but became real. The construction of the Fascist fatherland could start at that point. Mussolini himself showed the high road, speaking to the upper echelons of the party in September

1929. In such circumstances, he declared that the regime would not have waited long to 'expand the borders of the nation'.²⁰⁵ That process was already under way and 'the instrument of this expansion [was] the Party with its masses'.²⁰⁶ It was a purely rhetorical exercise to abstractedly discuss 'hypothetical disagreements between Fascism and the nation', considering that the PNF and its organisations included the 'majority of Italians who mean[t] something'.²⁰⁷ Ultimately, for the Duce, the distinction between Fascist Italians and anti-Fascist Italians was not only appropriate but also necessary. There was no place in the country for the latter, only for 'afascists'—those who did not take a political position—as long as they were 'honourable and exemplary' citizens.²⁰⁸

Following these instructions to the letter, the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship adopted measures that tore apart any illegal activity of organised anti-Fascism. The approval of an amnesty on a massive scale on the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome was nothing but the regime's public demonstration of the solidity and strength it enjoyed. The grant of amnesty took place in November 1932, while Achille Starace was Secretary of the Party. Mussolini entrusted him with the task of fascistising the entire nation and Starace attempted to accomplish this goal, implementing a principle that the Fascist theorists Alfredo Rocco and Giovanni Gentile laid down repeatedly. In particular, Rocco, presenting the 'Law on dispensation from service of state officials' on 24 December 1925, pinpointed that the identification between the state and the Fascist party was 'logical' and 'holy' since the PNF 'represent[ed] and idealis[ed] the nation'.²⁰⁹ This was the underlying assumption of the law that guaranteed complete correspondence between government and the bureaucracy that was in charge of implementing the directives of the head of the executive branch and building practically the Fascist state. For his part, Gentile, commenting on the constitutionalisation of the Grand Council in May 1928, wrote: 'The Party ceases to be a party. It is already virtually, and must be more and more effectively the Nation.'²¹⁰ Fascism had to be 'numerous' in order to be 'totalitarian', and this implied not 'leav[ing] any good Italian out of the political circles'.²¹¹

In order to incorporate the whole of Italian society, the PNF appropriated some pre-existing institutions and established new ones, trying to penetrate all areas of the nation. It did so in the sphere of welfare by creating the *Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia* (National Motherhood and Childhood Organisation) and the *Associazione Fascista Caduti, Mutilati, Feriti per la Rivoluzione* (Fascist Association for the Fallen,

Mutilated and Wounded for the Revolution). In the field of youth education, it established the *Organizzazione Nazionale Balilla* (National Organisation for Youth Education) which was absorbed into the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* (Italian Youth of Littorio) in 1937, and the already mentioned Gruppi Universitari Fascisti. The party also extended its tentacles in the economic field through the *Consiglio Nazionale delle Corporazioni* (National Council of Corporations) and the *Comitato Corporativo Centrale* (Central Corporative Committee), and in the cultural sphere with the Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura (Italian National Fascist Institute of Culture). Moreover, it controlled a large proportion of civil servants through associations dedicated, for instance, to school staff, public employees, state railway workers, state industrial workers and postal service workers. Not even leisure was left out. Just to mention some examples, the party organised it through the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National Recreational Organisation), the *Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano* (Italian National Olympic Committee), the institution of summer camps, and control of radio, cinema and theatre.²¹² Ultimately, the PNF was present in every aspect of private and collective existence.

Starace's era was marked by the 'great prestige' of the party and its 'capillarity' in the life of the country 'through a dense network of direct and connected organs' that 'permeate[d] the entire national fabric'.²¹³ He resolutely pursued this aim and, at the time of leaving the secretariat, wrote to Mussolini that the PNF structure had been 'developed to the extreme limit', up to the 'minimum unit', namely the individual.²¹⁴ The meaning of these words became clearer on 29 October 1939, when *Il Popolo d'Italia* published on its front page a table indicating the forces listed in the PNF and its dependent organisations. The figures were impressive: 20,411,596 out of 43,733,000 Italians were members of the party and its various associations.²¹⁵

Certainly, the number of affiliates to the Falange never reached such an impressive level.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, this does not diminish the importance that the Falangist project of nationalisation of the Spaniards assumed under the Francoist regime. From the early months of the Civil War, it was evident that the Caudillo's nationalist government was devoid of clear ideological orientation. To defeat the republic, the Generalísimo needed a political tool that was capable of providing adequate doctrinal backing and gaining the approval of the population. Excluding the conservative right, which dashed any expectation of national rebirth during the

1933–35 CEDA governments, the only parties in the rebellious front that could challenge the republicans on the ideological level were the Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista and *Comunión Tradicionalista*. Carlism was ‘heroic, romantic and full of virtues’ but suffered from inadequate political modernity.²¹⁷ Conversely, there was a widespread opinion in the Francoist headquarters in Salamanca that the FE de las JONS, as a revolutionary force with broad support in the occupied territory and a particular sensitivity to social needs, would have allowed nationalist Spain to ‘absorb red Spain ideologically’.²¹⁸

Grasping the cohesive and ‘nationalising’ potential of the Falange, Franco decided to use it to realise his hegemonic plans. Thus, he took advantage of the critical moment that the party experienced after it lost its main points of reference at the end of 1936. Onésimo Redondo Ortega fell in battle in the first days after the Alzamiento. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos was shot the following October. José Antonio Primo de Rivera died in front of a firing squad in a jail in Alicante on 20 November of the same year. The passing of the founding fathers of Spanish fascism and the absence of influential leaders who could keep the *camisas azules* together had consequences for the stability of the party, whose leadership was deeply divided. On the one hand, there were the supporters of Manuel Hedilla, then Secretary of the FE de las JONS, who was endowed with a strong revolutionary spirit and social conscience. On the other hand, the ‘legitimists’, the most intransigent and loyal supporters of José Antonio, opposed any change in the party. A third group composed of men who joined Falangism at the eleventh hour consisted mainly of opportunists, conservatives and technocrats.²¹⁹

Despite the difficulties, the Civil War gradually strengthened the influence of the Blackshirts in Franco’s deployment. The broad consensus the Falange had reached since the first months of the conflict and the exponential increase in the size of its militias were far from negligible.²²⁰ As Ferrán Gallego stresses, the FE de las JONS became the ‘more operational and useful option to organise the mobilisation’ and to ‘define the political and social goals of the New state’ in a context of the increasing radicalisation of the fascistisation process of the right and extreme right forces that started during the Second Republic.²²¹

Given the circumstances, it is no wonder that Franco began to see in National Syndicalism a potential threat to his power.²²² In view of this concern, the Caudillo astutely promoted the union of the various political components inside his front to bring Falangist activity back within

the limits he set. With an ‘inside out coup d’état’, as the young provincial chief of the Falange in Valladolid, Dionisio Ridruejo, later defined it, he merged the FE de las JONS with the Carlists.²²³ The Unification Decree of April 1937 created a new political entity of ‘national character’, the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista.²²⁴ At the same time, it dissolved all other organisations and political parties while uniting Falangist and Carlist paramilitary groups into a single national militia that supported the army commanded by Franco himself.²²⁵ Also known as *Movimiento Nacional* (National Movement), the FET de las JONS was under the direct control of the Generalísimo who became its *Jefe Nacional* (National Head) in addition to being *Jefe del Estado* (Head of State).²²⁶ Two party organs, the Junta Política and the *Consejo Nacional* (National Council), assisted him in his duties.²²⁷

The Caudillo established the new party on the model of the FE de las JONS. He maintained its denomination, political programme and main governing bodies; however Franco never acted like a fascist leader.²²⁸ He was a highly pragmatic modernising conservative who was determined to protect Spain from communism and the anarchy of the modern world. At the same time, he was glad to pretend to be pro-fascist as long as it enabled the nation to survive in the European context, which, at the time, was characterised by the advance of fascist powers.²²⁹ The forced marriage between Falangists and traditionalists is an emblematic example of Franco’s political realism. Through it, he achieved three extraordinary results at the same time. First, the fusion of the Spanish fascists with the Carlists gave homogeneity to the heterogeneous nationalist deployment. Second, it created a single party, which was an indispensable tool for the formation of the new revolutionary government. Third, and most importantly, it brought all the components of the authoritarian compromise under the Caudillo’s control, also thanks to the *Cuñadísimo*, Ramón Serrano Súñer, who considerably influenced Franco during his ascent to power.

Unlike Franco, Serrano Súñer favoured the creation of a more integrated and properly fascist political system. Considered the spokesman of the Falange, he had great admiration for Mussolini’s Italy and for Nazi Germany, which earned him the nickname ‘Minister of the Axis’ when he directed foreign affairs from October 1940 to September 1942. His intervention in the unification was crucial since he mediated relations with the most radical wing of Falangism to successfully complete the operation.²³⁰ De facto, the 1937 Unification Decree inflicted a significant

blow on Falange's autonomy. Nevertheless, the Blueshirts maintained a hegemonic role within the single party, which explains why the hopes of realising a Spanish fascist nation did not vanish among the most orthodox and coherent *camisas azules*.

Franco had to make some concessions to the Falangists to contain their discontent and to acknowledge the National Syndicalist dreams of greatness at least in words. Not by chance, the second article of the Unification Decree signed by the Caudillo established the 'definitive organisation of a new totalitarian state' as its ultimate goal, which the Generalísimo reiterated in an interview in July of the same year.²³¹ Moreover, the institutionalisation of a single party and the configuration of its main organs appeared to the Blueshirts as an essential step to strengthen their position.²³² Serrano Suárez's choice to entrust the direction of the Ministry of Press and Propaganda (under the Ministry of Interior which he led) to a zealous fascist like Ridruejo in March 1938 seemed a further step in the same direction.²³³ The fact that the new regime accepted the 1934 FE de las JONS programme ensured ideological continuity with National Syndicalism, while Franco's decision to adopt Falangist symbols and myths gave the new authoritarian state a 'fascist rhetorical patina'.²³⁴

Ultimately, Falange's forced acceptance of the 1937 unification was based on a compromise. The *camisas azules* committed themselves to respect the new hierarchical structure of the political system and Francoist leadership. In return, they received a promise that their project of true fascist totalitarianism would materialise once the Civil War was over.²³⁵ The National Syndicalist plans contemplated the creation of a new order for Spain that would have passed through the realisation of 'political socialism'.²³⁶ Summed up in the famous motto '*por la patria, el pan y la justicia*' ('for the fatherland, bread and justice'), it meant a 'high degree of identity between society and state' through the control of every branch of life in the country.²³⁷ The instrument for this purpose was the party as the 'transcendent, permanent and irrevocable synthesis' of the nation.²³⁸ The Falange did not feed itself on 'fragments', 'entities', 'vocations' or any 'partial sense among those composing the homeland'.²³⁹ It must have a totalitarian and inclusive scope since, as Ridruejo wrote, it 'was born to be everything or to die', with 'everything' meaning 'simply the total reconstruction of the fatherland'.²⁴⁰

As the nationalist deployment won on the battlefield, the Blueshirts, following the example of the PNF, started to act in the name of Spain exclusively. This process underwent an inevitable acceleration during the

Second World War when, from 1940 to 1941, National Socialist military successes seemed to herald the creation of a new fascist and totalitarian order on a European scale. Salvador Lissarrague Novoa, philosopher and law sociologist close to the party, explicitly stated: 'In opposition to the purely national [element] that is an abstract and empty formula, we proclaim the Falangist [element], which gives life and configuration in the present to the nation.'²⁴¹ Falange and nation became synonymous, which meant that there was no national dimension except the Falangist one.

These were the ideological assumptions on which the *camisas azules* sought to build the Spanish fascist nation materially. They did it in the same way as the Blackshirts did in Italy, namely by occupying as much space as possible in the state apparatus. The order of the General Government in October 1937, which tied any administrative, local or provincial assignment to the approval not only of the Civil Guard but also of FET de las JONS leaders, constituted a step in that direction.²⁴² Similarly, the creation of Falangist delegates at district, section and even at street level—exactly as happened in Italy during Starace's secretariat—indicated to the extent to which the Falange wanted to increase its control over the territory.²⁴³

Admittedly, the Blueshirts had been trying to penetrate the life of the nation even before the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1934, José Antonio's sister Pilar Primo de Rivera founded the *Sección Femenina* (Female Section) of the FE de las JONS, which facilitated the fascist education of Spanish women and guaranteed primary welfare services until Franco's death.²⁴⁴ In 1936, Onésimo Redondo Ortega's widow created the *Auxilio Social* (Social Aid)—originally *Auxilio de Invierno* (Winter Aid)—which worked as an efficient humanitarian relief agency, which the Sección Femenina incorporated in January 1937. Starting in December 1940, the *Frente de Juventudes* (Youth Front) began to look after the political, physical and premilitary education of young National Syndicalists, following the example of the Opera Nazionale Balilla and the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio.

Control over the economy was another key element of the Falangist struggle for the 'authentication of the regime' in a totalitarian sense and the 'reconstitution of state power'.²⁴⁵ Italian Fascist corporatism showed the Blueshirts the way forward. Corporatist ideas had begun to circulate in Spain during Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship when the Fascist debate on the labour market in Italy inspired the new Spanish labour reform of 1926.²⁴⁶ However, it was the National Council of

the FET de las JONS that implemented a more developed corporatist system twelve years later. It did so by approving the *Fuero del Trabajo* (Labour Law) in March 1938, which, while containing some peculiarities, had the Italian Fascist corporatist project as its main reference model.²⁴⁷ The document noticeably recalled Mussolini's Labour Chart of 1927.²⁴⁸ It was not by chance that an Italian Fascist trade unionist and consultant at the Italian Embassy, Ernesto Marchiandi, was called to attend its drafting.²⁴⁹ The new law laid the foundation for creating the *Organización Sindical Española* (Spanish Union Organisation or OSE), which the *Ley de Unidad Sindical* set up in January 1940.²⁵⁰ The OSE instituted an order of vertical unions in the agricultural, service and industrial fields, which included all the factors of production that must serve the 'supreme interest of the nation'.²⁵¹ However, the organisation was the tepid outcome of bargaining among various interest groups in the FET National Council. It did not introduce radical changes to the production system and had little practical application, to the point that Ridruejo defined it with total disappointment as a 'ghost ridiculed by rhetoric'.²⁵²

Deprived of political autonomy, the Falange never succeeded in realising its plan to create an authentic 'nation in blue shirt'. Nonetheless, the National Syndicalist programme of nationalisation of the Spaniards had a radically revolutionary and genuinely fascist significance. Despite the obstacles it encountered, this project did not remain a dead letter but determined concrete political choices. It is an undeniable historical record that its results were much more modest than those of the PNF in terms of the effective construction of a totalitarian state. However, the comparative analysis shows a fundamental shared element between Italian and Spanish fascism. Both identified the nation as the instrument to rebuild people's identity. For them, it embodied the ideal weapon against the political, social, cultural and moral crisis caused by modernity, which liberal democracy, despite its best efforts, had failed to overcome.

NOTES

1. Carlo Costamagna, 'Nazione,' in *Dizionario di politica*, ed. Partito Nazionale Fascista (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1940), vol. III, 264. The complete reference to Beneyto Pérez is Juan Beneyto Pérez, *El nuevo Estado español. El régimen nacional-sindicalista ante la tradición y los sistemas totalitarios* (Cadiz: Biblioteca Nueva, 1939) [I ed. 1938].

2. On the exceptionality of Spain in relation to the crisis of the end of the nineteenth century see Ismael Saz Campos, 'Rigeneracionismos y nuevos nacionalismos: el caso español en una perspectiva europea,' in *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea*, eds. Ismael Saz Campos and Ferrán Archilés (Zaragoza: Prensa Universitaria de Zaragoza, 2011), 55–58. Cf. also Alfonso Botti, 'Italia e Spagna nella crisi di fine secolo: aspetti a confronto in una prospettiva comparata,' in *Intorno al 1898. Italia e Spagna nella crisi di fine secolo*, ed. Silvana Casmirri (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2001), 158–175; Manuel Suárez Cortina, 'Demócratas sin democracia. Republicanos sin república. Los demócratas españoles e italianos en el apogeo y crisis del Estado liberal, 1870–1923,' in *La Restauración entre el liberalismo y la democracia*, ed. Manuel Suárez Cortina (Madrid: Alianza, 1997), 317–367.
3. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'La utilidad el nacionalismo' (15 February 1932), in Onésimo Redondo Ortega, *El Estado Nacional* (Madrid: Ediciones F.E., 1939), 35–36.
4. Giovanni Gentile, 'Mazzini e la nuova Italia,' *Civiltà fascista* 7 (July 1934): 591.
5. Johan Huizinga, 'Patriotism and nationalism in European history,' in *Men and ideas: History, middle ages, the renaissance*, ed. Johan Huizinga (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 97.
6. Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of nationalism* (London: Macmillan Press, 2010), 209.
7. Ibidem.
8. Ibidem.
9. On the eve of the March on Rome, during the PNF Congress held in Naples from 24 to 26 October 1922, Mussolini declared unequivocally that the nation was one of the founding pillars of Fascist ideology. On that occasion, the head of the Blackshirts declared: 'Our myth is the nation, our myth is the greatness of the nation! To this myth, to this greatness that we want to revive completely, we subordinate everything else.' 'Discorso di Napoli,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 255 (25 October 1922), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (Firenze: La Fenice, 1951–1963), vol. XVIII, 457.
10. Francesco Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1977), 7–12; Francesco Perfetti, *Il movimento nazionalista in Italia (1903–1914)* (Roma: Bonacci, 1984), 7–17, 46–91. See also Franco Gaeta, *Il nazionalismo italiano* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1981), 219–251; Elena Papadia, *Nel nome della nazione. L'Associazione Nazionalista Italiana in età giolittiana* (Roma: Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano, 2006), 2–26, 205–230.
11. Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 9.

12. On Italian nationalism as an autochthonous phenomenon see Ugo D'Andrea, 'Nazionalismo,' in *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, ed. Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana (Milano: Treccani, 1934), vol. XXIV, 465–466; Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 25–32; Gioacchino Volpe, *Italia moderna, 1910–1914* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1952), vol. III, 309–310.
13. Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 53.
14. On Futurism and its influence on Fascism, see Emilio Gentile, 'Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al fascismo (1909–1920),' in *Futurismo, cultura e politica*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988), 105–157; Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), 109–128. Cf. Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 44–45.
15. Ibidem, 112.
16. Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 93, 107.
17. Volpe, *Italia moderna, 1910–1914*, vol. III, 304.
18. Ibidem, 305–306. See also Papadia, *Nel nome della nazione. L'Associazione Nazionalista Italiana in età giolittiana*, 26–32; Roberto Vivarelli, *Fascismo e storia d'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), 62–81; Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 86–91.
19. Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 33–43.
20. Volpe, *Italia moderna, 1910–1914*, vol. III, 307.
21. Roberto Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo. L'Italia dalla Grande Guerra alla marcia su Roma* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), vol. III, 229; Volpe, *Italia moderna, 1910–1914*, vol. III, 292, 300. See also Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 91–94.
22. On the concept of 'ideology of the crisis,' see Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, 57.
23. Ernesto Galli della Loggia, *Tre giorni nella storia d'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 30.
24. Cf. Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, 57–58; Alberto Mario Banti, *Sublime madre nostra. La nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al Fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 146–150.
25. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 161–162; Emilio Gentile, *Né nazione né stato* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2010), 50–53.

26. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 149; Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993), 30; Renzo De Felice, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2012), 157–162 [I ed. 1969].
27. Fascism always rejected the idea, typical of the romantic conservatism, according to which native elements such as language, race, culture, customs, traditions and territory determined the nation. In Benito Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo* (Milano-Roma: Fratelli Treves, 1933), 6. The quote is in Ezio Chichiarelli, ‘Motivi e forze dell’universalità del fascismo,’ *Gerarchia* 1 (January 1937): 43. Cf. Gentile, *Le origini dell’ideologia fascista*, 218–228.
28. Gherardo Casini, ‘Problema essenziale,’ *Critica fascista* 23 (1 December 1924): 724.
29. Bruno Spampanato, ‘Dove arriva lo Stato,’ *Critica fascista* 1 (1 January 1932): 16; Bruno Spampanato, ‘L’universalità di ottobre. Introduzione al Fascismo,’ *Critica fascista* 16 (15 August 1931): 304.
30. Camillo Pellizzi, ‘La Nazione e l’impero,’ *Gerarchia* 6 (June 1924): 366.
31. Ibidem.
32. Mario Untersteiner, ‘I difetti di una nazione,’ *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1923): 1095–1099.
33. Volt, ‘Introduzione alla storia d’Italia,’ *Gerarchia* 3 (March 1923): 814.
34. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 35.
35. Giovanni Belardelli, *Il Ventennio degli intellettuali. Cultura, politica, ideologia nell’Italia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2005), 252–257; Giovanni Belardelli, *Mazzini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 243–248; Simon Levis Sullam, *L’apostolo a brandelli. L’eredità di Mazzini tra Risorgimento e fascismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2010), VII–XI, 57–62, 75–81; Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 151.
36. Giovanni Gentile, ‘Che cos’è il fascismo,’ in *Politica e Cultura*, ed. Hervé A. Cavallera (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1990), vol. I, 20–27. The quote is on page 21. Although at the beginning of the twentieth century Gentile was completely fascinated by the political thought of Vincenzo Gioberti, after the outbreak of the First World War it was Mazzini who caught his attention. In the Gentilian perspective, Mazzini became the key man of the Risorgimento and the precursor of that ethical and moral conception of the nation so dear to Fascism. According to Gentile’s interpretation: ‘During the Italian Risorgimento, there was the individual but not the citizen; there was the man but not the nation, which, until it did not become a state, is an aspiration, an ideal concept that has to become a reality. [...] This was what Mazzini saw, and this was his torment and the reason for his apostolate. He saw it better than all the protagonists of the Risorgimento who came after him, imbuing them with faith and making them march energetically on the path that

- he opened to reach the goal he affirmed. Since in Mazzini the problem of unity, the problem of the existence of Italy is renewed, is transformed, it acquires a new meaning because it finally ceases to be an abstract ideal that touches the mind and not the will of man.' In Gentile, 'Mazzini e la nuova Italia,' 581. On Giovanni Gentile's interpretation of Mazzini, see also Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, 353–355; Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, 9–12; Levis Sullam, *L'apostolo a brandelli. L'eredità di Mazzini tra Risorgimento e fascismo*, 75–81.
37. Arrigo Solmi, 'L'eredità di Mazzini,' *Gerarchia* 3 (March 1922): 117. See also Dino Grandi, 'Le origini e la missione del fascismo,' in *Autobiografia del fascismo. Antologia di testi fascisti 1919–1945*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Milano: Einaudi, 2004), 102–109.
 38. Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 74.
 39. 'Programma e statuti del Partito Nazionale Fascista,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 308 (27 December 1921), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XVII, 334.
 40. Angelo Oliviero Olivetti, 'Sindacalismo integrale,' *La Stirpe* (April 1924), in *Il sindacalismo fascista. I. Dalle origini alla vigilia dello Stato corporativo*, ed. Francesco Perfetti (Roma: Bonacci, 1988), 297.
 41. Manlio Pompei, 'Collettività e Nazione,' *Critica fascista* 17 (1 September 1933): 339.
 42. Chichiarelli, 'Motivi e forze dell'universalità del fascismo,' 43. See also Maurizio Maraviglia, 'Nazionalità ed universalità del fascismo,' in *Dottrina e politica fascista*, ed. Facoltà Fascista di Scienze Politiche (Perugia-Venezia: La nuova Italia Editrice, 1930), 220. Cf. Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 73.
 43. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, 5–6; Antonino Pagliaro, 'Motivi sull'individuo,' *Civiltà fascista* 6 (June 1937): 427. See also 'Programma e statuti del Partito Nazionale Fascista,' 334; Cur, 'Sentimento della nazione,' *Vincere. Passo romano* 6 (15 January 1943): 5. Cf. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 177–179.
 44. Giuseppe Mazzini, *Doveri dell'uomo e Ai giovani d'Italia* (Milano: Garzanti, 1944), 210–211 [I ed. 1860].
 45. 'Programma e statuti del Partito Nazionale Fascista,' 334.
 46. Giovanni Gentile, *I profeti del Risorgimento* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1928), 51–52; Gentile, 'Mazzini e la nuova Italia,' 586–588. On Mazzini's concept of 'duty' see also Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 79–88; Vivarelli, *Storia delle origini del fascismo. L'Italia dalla Grande Guerra alla marcia su Roma*, vol. III, 227–229. Cf. Paolo Benedetti, 'Mazzini in "camicia nera",' *Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa* XXII (2007): 189–204.
 47. Widar Cesarini Sforza, 'AntiRisorgimento,' *Critica fascista* 16 (15 August 1924): 576.

48. Piero Crivelli, 'La coscienza nazionale,' *Critica fascista* 3 (1 February 1925): 49.
49. Ugo D'Andrea, 'L'Italia di fine secolo e la Rivoluzione Fascista,' *Critica fascista* 7 (1 April 1926): 127.
50. 'I pochi e i molti,' *Critica fascista* 23 (1 December 1925): 441–442.
51. Franco Ciarlantini, 'Valore educativo dell'intransigenza,' *Gerarchia* 8 (August 1925): 526. See also Ugo D'Andrea, 'L'italiano di Mussolini,' *Critica fascista* 8 (15 April 1931): 159–160; Paolo Curaiolo, 'Etica fascista,' *Libro e Moschetto* 4 (26 January 1935): 8.
52. Camillo Pellizzi, 'AntiRisorgimento,' *Gerarchia* 9 (September 1924): 540.
53. Ibidem.
54. The quotes are in Giuseppe Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, ed. Giordano B. Guerri (Milano: Rizzoli, 1982), 468. The expression 'apostle in shreds' is in Levis Sullam, *L'apostolo a brandelli. L'eredità di Mazzini tra Risorgimento e fascismo*, 56–59; Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 245–246.
55. The expression 'humanitarian Catholicism' is in Mazzini's letter to Luigi Amedeo Melegari (August 1836), reproduced in *Scritti editi ed inediti di Giuseppe Mazzini. Vol. XII. Epistolario. Vol. V* (Imola: Galeati, 1912), 60.
56. Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 74.
57. On the Fascist cult of the fatherland and the centrality of the concept of 'political religion' in the study of Fascism, see Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, 59–103, 111–117; Emilio Gentile, 'La vita ai tempi del totalitarismo,' *Il Sole 24 ore* 111 (22 April 2012): 28.
58. See Benedetti, 'Mazzini in "camicia nera",' 179–189.
59. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 158–159.
60. Belardelli, *Mazzini*, 83–84. On this topic, see also Roberto Vivarelli, *I caratteri dell'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 130; Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, 12.
61. Vivarelli, *Fascismo e storia d'Italia*, 124, 129.
62. Benito Mussolini, 'Fascismo,' *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, vol. XIV, 847.
63. Gentile, 'Che cos'è il fascismo,' 24.
64. Sacino Vitangelo, 'L'ideale del Risorgimento italiano effettuato dal fascismo,' *Libro e Moschetto* 62 (8 December 1934): 7.
65. Ibidem.
66. Pellizzi, 'AntiRisorgimento,' 539. See also 'Anno XIV,' *Civiltà fascista* 11 (November 1935): 934–937; Curaiolo, 'Etica fascista,' 8.
67. Mussolini, 'Fascismo,' 877; Gentile, 'Mazzini e la nuova Italia,' 592.
68. 'España estancada,' *Arriba* 1 (21 March 1935), in José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, ed. Agustín del Río Cisneros (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1976), 582.

69. 'Lo femenino y la Falange,' *Arriba* 7 (2 May 1935), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo II*, 659.
70. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'La tradición y el pueblo' (30 January 1933), in Redondo Ortega, *El Estado Nacional*, 105.
71. Ibidem, 102. On the topic see Matteo Tomasoni, *El caudillo olvidado. Vida, obra y pensamiento de Onésimo Redondo (1905–1936)* (Granada: Comares, 2017), 157–171.
72. The yoke and the arrows constituted the emblems of the Catholic Kings. The former represented Ferdinand of Aragon; the latter represented Isabel of Castile. The Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista use them first. After the fusion of JONS with the Falange Española in February 1934, they became the symbols of the flag of the new party. In Gabriele Ranzato, *L'eclissi della democrazia. La guerra civile spagnola e le sue origini 1931–1939* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2012), 180.
73. 'España estancada,' 579.
74. Ibidem.
75. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España* [I ed. 1935], ed. Pedro González Cuevas (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2003), 52.
76. Ibidem, 54.
77. On this topic, see Elena Herández Sandoica, 'En torno a un centenario y su historiografía la Restauración, la política colonial española y el desastre del '98,' in *Intorno al 1898. Italia e Spagna nella crisi di fine secolo*, 15–38.
78. Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 72, 77–78; Ismael Saz Campos, 'Paradojas de la historia, paradojas de la historiografía. Las peripecias del fascismo español,' *Hispania* 61, 207 (2001): 152. On the topic, see also Santos Juliá, 'En España: fin de imperio, agonía de la nación,' in *Viejos y nuevos imperios. España y Gran Bretaña, siglos XVII–XX*, eds. Isabel Burdiel and Roy Church (Valencia: Ediciones Episteme, 1998), 95–112.
79. Ismael Saz Campos, 'Regeneracionismos y nuevos nacionalismos: el caso español en una perspectiva europea,' in *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea*, eds. Ismael Saz Campos and Ferrán Archiles (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2011), 62.
80. Miguel de Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1961), 129, 134 [I ed. 1902].
81. 'Nos duele España,' in *José Antonio y la Revolución Nacional*, ed. Agustín del Río Cisneros (Madrid: Ediciones del Movimiento, 1971), 51.

82. Unamuno used the expression '*Me duele España*' ('Spain pains me') for the first time in a letter that he sent to a Spanish professor living in Buenos Aires in November 1923. The Argentinian periodical *Nosotros* transcribed a fragment of the letter in the following December. See Miguel de Unamuno, 'Un grito en el corazón: Hermosas palabras de un hombre libre,' *Nosotros* 175 (December 1923): 521.
83. See Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo*, 132–139.
84. Ibidem, 42.
85. On the concept of 'casticismo' and 'intrahistoria' see Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo*, 13–14, 39–40.
86. Ibidem, 33.
87. Joan Maria Thomàs, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito* (Barcelona: Debate, 2017), 349, 354–355.
88. Joan Maria Thomàs, *Los fascismos españoles* (Madrid: Planeta, 2011), 31–35.
89. 'Alle grandi assise del fascismo. Parla Mussolini,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 148 (24 June 1925): 1.
90. For a detailed analysis of these organisations see Thomàs, *Los fascismos españoles*, 37–62.
91. 'Homenaje y reproche a Don José Ortega y Gasset,' *Haz* 12 (5 December 1935), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo II*, 831. On the topic, see Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 86–99; Ismael Saz Campos, 'Las raíces culturales del franquismo,' in *Del franquismo a la democracia 1936–2013*, eds. Manuel Pérez Ledesma and Ismael Saz Campos (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2014), 24; Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, 'Nación, tradición e imperio en la extrema derecha española durante la década de 1930,' *Hispania* 182 (1992): 999–1030.
92. Saz Campos, 'Paradojas de la historia, paradojas de la historiografía. Las peripecias del fascismo español,' 158–159.
93. José Ortega y Gasset, *España invertebrada* (Madrid: Ediciones de la revista de Occidente, 1966), 58 [I ed. 1921].
94. Thomàs, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito*, 350.
95. Ortega y Gasset, *España invertebrada*, 31, 33.
96. Ibidem, 65.
97. Ibidem, 33–34.
98. Ibidem, 34–36, 38.
99. Ibidem, 122, 125. On the topic, see Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2015), 141–142.
100. Thomàs, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito*, 336.
101. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 105–118; Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 25.

102. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, 'Ernesto Giménez Caballero: unidad nacional y política de masas en un intelectual fascista,' *Historia y política* 24 (June–December 2010): 270.
103. Ibidem, 278–280. See also Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 98–99; Lorenzo Delgado Gomez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), 170.
104. 'Homenaje y reproche a Don José Ortega y Gasset,' 831.
105. For a more in-depth analysis of Ortega y Gasset's influence on José Antonio concerning the idea of the division of society between 'masses' and 'selected minorities' see Tomás, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito*, 340–346.
106. It may seem contradictory that José Antonio did not want to proclaim himself a nationalist and refused to attribute this connotation to his party. In November 1935 during the speech at the Cinema Madrid, he declared: 'We are not nationalists because being a nationalist is [...] to implant the deepest spiritual springs on a physical motive, on a mere physical circumstance; we are not nationalists because nationalism is the individualism of the people; we are Spaniards, [...] that is one of the few serious things that we can be in the world.' More than a denial of nationalism *tout court*, this position was due to aversion to two specific types of nationalism. On the one hand, Primo de Rivera refused the Herderian Romantic nationalism with which the founders of the Falange associated the Spanish separatisms that threatened the sacred unity of the state. On the other hand, he rejected Rousseauian nationalism that postulated the inseparable link between nation and freedom. In 'Discurso pronunciado en el Cine Madrid' (17 November 1935), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo II*, 811. The quotes in the text are in 'Ensayo sobre el nacionalismo,' *JONS* 16 (April 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 349–350.
107. Ortega y Gasset, *España invertebrada*, 31, 33. Cf. Tomás, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito*, 348.
108. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS' (November 1934) and 'Puntos iniciales,' *FE* 1 (1 December 1933), both reproduced in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 219–226, 478–482.
109. Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 67. See also 'Nuestra revolución,' *JONS* 2 (June 1933): 49–54, in Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *Obras Completas*, vol. III (Madrid-Barcelona: Fundación Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, 2004), 356; Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, 'La patria y su unidad,' *Destino* 61 (1 May 1938): 4; Raimundo Fernández

- Cuesta, *El concepto falangista del Estado* (Madrid: Ediciones para el bolsillo de la camisa azul, 1939), 38.
110. 'Ensayo sobre el nacionalismo,' 349–350.
 111. Ibidem, 350. On the topic see Ismael Saz Campos, 'Las Españas del franquismo: ascenso y declive del discurso de nación,' in *Discursos de España en el siglo XX*, eds. Carlos Forcadell, Ismael Saz Campos, and Pilar Salomón (Valencia: Publicacions Universitat de Valencia, 2009), 153–154. On the Falangist rejection of the naturalistic interpretation of the nation, see José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Revolución Nacional*, ed. Agustín Del Río Cisneros (Madrid: Ediciones prensa del Movimiento, 1949), 122; Fernández Cuesta, *El concepto falangista del Estado*, 34. For further information on the subject, see Thomás, *José Antonio. Realidad y mito*, 348–349, 352–354.
 112. See Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, 'Nacionalismo español y franquismo: una visión general,' in *Culturas políticas del nacionalismo español. Del franquismo a la transición*, ed. Manuel Ortiz Heras (Madrid: La Catarata, 2009), 22–23.
 113. Gonzalo Maestre, 'El tema religioso-católico en la Falange Española durante la Segunda República,' *Aportes* 90 (2016): 65–100.
 114. Giovanni Gentile, 'Dopo la fondazione dell'impero,' in *Politica e cultura*, ed. Hervé A. Cavallera (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1991), vol. II, 150; Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'El nacionalismo no debe ser confesional' (29 February 1932), in Redondo Ortega, *El Estado Nacional*, 41.
 115. Redondo Ortega, 'El nacionalismo no debe ser confesional,' 42–47.
 116. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *¿Fascismo en España?* [I ed. 1935], in Ledesma Ramos, *Obras completas*, vol. IV, 154–155.
 117. Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 70, 88.
 118. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS,' 482. See Chris Bannister 'José Antonio Primo de Rivera: Catholic fascism,' in *Right-wing Spain in the Civil War era: Soldiers of God and apostles of the fatherland, 1914–45*, eds. Alejandro Quiroga and Miguel Ángel Del Arco Blanco (London: Continuum, 2012), 91–116.
 119. Ibidem, 482.
 120. Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 87. For the Italian case see Gentile, *Il culto del littorio*, 122–123; Emilio Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo* (Roma: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1993), 186–188; Renato Moro, 'Nación, catolicismo y régimen fascista,' in *Fascismo y Franquismo cara a cara. Una perspectiva histórica*, eds. Javier Tusell, Emilio Gentile, and Giuliana De Febo (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2004), 123–124. A detailed analysis of the different phases of the relationship between Fascism, Catholicism and nation in Italy is in Renato Moro, 'Nación, catolicismo y régimen fascista,' 125–131.

- Cf. also Pietro Scoppola, *Coscienza religiosa e democrazia nell'Italia contemporanea* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1966), 362–418.
121. The presence of original aspects in the Falangist thought, such as the Catholic element, compared with other fascist movements was a badge of honour for some party ideologues at that time. While declaring they drew on Mussolini's doctrine, they tried to free themselves from it to restate their authenticity. In this respect, José Antonio Primo de Rivera's words are paradigmatic: 'People say that we imitate Italy. Yes, we do imitate it in order to search our inner *raison d'être* in our guts.' 'Declaraciones en "Ahora"' (16 February 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos* (1922–1936). Tomo I, 305–306. Cf. 'Discurso de proclamación de Falange Española de las JONS' (4 March 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos* (1922–1936). Tomo I, 331; Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'El Estado del porvenir' (20 February 1933), in Redondo Ortega, *El Estado Nacional*, 114–115. On José Antonio Primo de Rivera's 'idea of a Spanish formula to fascism,' see also Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network*, 27–29.
 122. About the Civil War as a 'crusade' see Ismael Saz Campos, *Las caras del franquismo* (Granada: Editorial Comares, 2013), 39–49; Ismael Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo* (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2004), 128–129; Zira Box, *España año cero. La construcción simbólica del franquismo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2010), 124–150; Giuliana Di Febo, 'La crociata e la politicizzazione del sacro. Un caudillo providenziale,' in *Fascismo y Franquismo cara a cara. Una perspectiva histórica*, 83–97; Ranzato, *L'eclissi della democrazia. La guerra civile spagnola e le sue origini 1931–1939*, 406–420.
 123. Ortega y Gasset, *España invertebrada*, 36, 38.
 124. Roger Griffin, *Fascism: An introduction to comparative fascist studies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), 41–42.
 125. Ibidem, 42.
 126. Guido Mastracchio, 'La concezione biologica dello stato fascista,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1937): 460, 463. See also Roberto Pavese, 'Appunti di etica fascista,' *Critica fascista* 13 (1 July 1933): 248–249; 'Discurso sobre la revolución española' (19 May 1935), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos* (1922–1936). Tomo I, 562–563.
 127. Griffin, *Fascism: An introduction to comparative fascist studies*, 46. See also Roger Griffin, *The nature of fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991), 31–39.
 128. Costamagna, 'Nazione,' 264.
 129. A first draft of this section has been previously published in the form of an article as Giorgia Priorelli, 'The fight against the "anti-nation" as a historical mission: The delegitimisation of the enemy in Italian Fascism

- and Spanish Fascism,' *Revista História: Debates e Tendências* 3 (2018): 449–463. ISSN-e 2238-8885.
130. Benito Mussolini, 'Siamo passati e vi dico che passeremo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 27 (27 January 1939): 1. See also Luigi Barzini, 'La guerra di Spagna è virtualmente finita,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 29 (29 January 1939): 1.
 131. About the Italian intervention alongside the nationalist front and about the battle of Guadalajara see, among others, Stanley G. Payne, *The Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 134–139; Gabriele Ranzato, *L'eclissi della democrazia. La guerra civile spagnola e le sue origini 1931–1939*, 300–308, 372–379; Pilar Vilar, *La guerra civile española* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2000), 78–80; Paul Preston, *La guerra civile spagnola. 1936–1939* (Milano: Mondadori, 1998), 92–95, 150–152; Brian Sullivan, 'Fascist Italy's involvement in the Spanish Civil War,' *Journal of Military History* 59 (1995): 697–727; Stanley G. Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1965), 98–99, 158–161. For an recent contribution on Fascist Italy as the 'third belligerent' in the Spanish Civil War, see Javier Rodrigo, 'Fascist civil warfare: Mussolini's wars in Spain and Italy, 1936–1945,' in *Fascist warfare, 1922–1945: Aggression, occupation, annihilation*, eds. Miguel Alonso, Alan Kramer, and Javier Rodrigo (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 96–118. Specifically on the role of the Italian Corps of Volunteer Troops and Maria Roatta in Spain, see Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network*, 41, 44–47.
 132. On the clash between the 'two Italy' during 1943–1945, see Ernesto Galli della Loggia, *La morte della patria* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2008), 32–40; Luigi Ganapini, *La repubblica delle camicie nere* (Milano: Garzanti, 2002), 7–128; Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 231–268.
 133. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 158.
 134. The Civil War conferred political legitimacy on the Falange and gave its project of nationalisation of the Spaniards the recognition and the popular approval that had so far been lacking. Indeed, on the eve of the Alzamiento, the party had a rather small base of consensus. The first reason was its low political weight, considering that, in the elections of February 1936, it had just received 0.4% of votes. The second reason was the isolation to which it had been relegated: it was declared illegal from March onwards because of the waves of violence triggered in the country by its adepts. The third reason was the internal crisis that struck it in the autumn of 1936 when, after many of its leaders had been killed or imprisoned, the party lacked a stable leadership. The electoral data are in Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 71. On the topic, see also Ferrán

- Gallego, *El evangelio fascista, La formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2014), 405–430, 443–479.
135. Ismael Saz Campos, 'Visiones de patria entra la dictadura y la democracia,' in *La nación de los españoles*, eds. Ismael Saz Campos and Ferrán Archilés (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de Valencia, 2014), 272. On this topic see also Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismo franquistas*, 366–369; Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 163–165.
 136. Saz Campos, *Visiones de patria entra la dictadura y la democracia*, 272.
 137. Ibidem.
 138. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 184.
 139. Loreto Di Nucci, 'Lo Stato fascista e gli italiani "antinazionali",' in *Due nazioni. Legittimazione e delegittimazione nella storia dell'età contemporanea*, eds. Loreto Di Nucci and Ernesto Galli Della Loggia (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003), 127–133; Loreto Di Nucci, *Nel cantiere dello Stato fascista* (Roma: Carocci, 2008), 16.
 140. Payne, *Fascism. Comparison and definition*, 6.
 141. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 166–167.
 142. Gherardo Casini, 'Problema essenziale,' *Critica fascista* 23 (1 December 1924): 724. See also Giovanni Selvi, 'Le basi naturali della dottrina fascista,' *Gerarchia* 4 (April 1926): 235–244.
 143. The term *caciquismo* refers to a political system ruled by local chiefs or bosses, the *caciques*. About the phenomenon of *caciquismo* in Spain in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century see Costa, *Oligarquía y caciquismo como la forma actual de gobierno en España: urgencia y modo de cambiarla*, 63–106. Cf. *El poder de la influencia. Geografía del caciquismo en España (1875–1923)*, ed. José Varela Ortega (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), 11–14, 559–616; José Varela Ortega, *Los amigos políticos. Partidos, elecciones y caciquismo en la Restauración* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), 465–500.
 144. Ranzato, *L'eclissi della democrazia. La guerra civile spagnola e le sue origini 1931–1939*, 151–169.
 145. Selvi, 'Le basi naturali della dottrina fascista,' 235. See also 'Il mondo e noi,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 221 (15 September 1929): 2.
 146. Ibidem, 236.
 147. Enrico Corradini, 'Libertà e autorità,' *Gerarchia* 4 (April 1928): 300; Romolo Murri, 'L'essenza della democrazia,' *Critica fascista* 22 (15 November 1924): 704.
 148. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, 'Ideas sobre el Estado,' *Acción Española* 24 (1 March 1933): 582.
 149. 'Discurso de la fundación de Falange Española' (29 de October 1933), in José Antonio Primo de Rivera. *Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 189.

150. Ibidem, 189.
151. Ibidem, 190.
152. Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, 'Discurso pronunciado por el excelentísimo señor Ministro de Agricultura y Secretario General de FET y de las JONS Don Raimundo Fernández Cuesta en Valladolid,' in *Dieciocho de Julio. Tres discursos*, eds. Ramón Serrano Súñer, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, and Francisco Franco (Madrid: Ediciones Arriba, 1938), 31–32.
153. Mussolini coined the verb 'caporettese' to mean the PSI intent to lead Italy to the catastrophe. This neologism comes from Caporetto, the former Italian village now part of the Slovenian territory, where the Italian Army underwent a ruinous defeat by Austro-German forces in 1917. Benito Mussolini, 'Caporetismo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 194 (17 July 1919): 1.
154. Loreto Di Nucci, *Lo Stato-partito del fascismo. Genesi, evoluzione e crisi (1919–1945)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), 36–41; Di Nucci, *Nel cantiere dello Stato fascista*, 23. See also Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista*, 154–165.
155. Gallego, *El evangelio fascista. La formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)*, 36.
156. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'La nueva política' (5 June 1933), in *El estado nacional*, 157.
157. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 143–144.
158. 'Il programma,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 83 (24 March 1919): 1.
159. Galli della Loggia, *Tre giorni nella storia d'Italia*, 33–42; Angelo Tasca, *Nascita e avvento del fascismo* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1995), 189–228.
160. Ibidem, 190. Concerning the autumn 1920 administrative elections, it is important to remember that the anti-socialist bloc held 56% of the votes on a national basis, obtaining 4655 municipalities on 8346 and 33 provincial councils of 69. Socialists conquered the majority in 2022 municipalities and 26 provincial councils. The electoral data are in Emilio Gentile, *E fu subito regime. Il fascismo e la marcia su Roma* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2012), 15.
161. Di Nucci, *Nel cantiere dello Stato fascista*, 24.
162. Enrico Corradini, 'Il fascismo e la riforma costituzionale,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1923): 1065.
163. Arturo Marpicati, 'Dall'antipartito al Partito Nazionale Fascista,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1934): 796–797.
164. Benigno Crespi, 'Ordine nuovo,' *Critica fascista* 9 (1 May 1929): 180–181.
165. 'España estancada,' 581.
166. Ibidem, 581.

167. Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la guerra civil española* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 251.
168. Ranzato, *L'eclissi della democrazia. La guerra civile spagnola e le sue origini 1931–1939*, 455.
169. 'Trecentoventi,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 161 (11 June 1937): 1. Cf. Francisco Cobo Romero, 'El franquismo y los imaginarios míticos del fascismo europeo de entreguerras,' *Ayer* 71 (2008): 136–139; Francisco Sevillano, 'El "rojo". La imagen del enemigo en la España nacional,' in *Los enemigos de España. Imagen del otro, conflictos bélicos y disputas nacionales (siglos XVI–XX)*, eds. Francisco Sevillano and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (Madrid: CEPC, 2010), 327–340.
170. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Señales del estado antinacional' (19 December 1932), in *El estado nacional*, 72.
171. Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la guerra civil española*, 247. Cf. Miguel Ángel Del Arco Blanco, 'Before the altar of the Fatherland: Catholicism, the politics of modernisation and nationalisation during the Spanish Civil War,' *European History Quarterly* 2 (2019): 232–255; Miguel Alonso Ibarra, 'Guerra Civil española y contrarrevolución. El fascismo europeo bajo el signo de la Santa Cruz,' *Ayer* 109 (2018): 269–295. On religious persecution during the Second Spanish Republic, see Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España, 1936–1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1999); Gonzalo Redondo, *Historia de la Iglesia en España 1931–1939* (Madrid: Rialp, 1993); Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda República (1931–1939)* (Madrid: Rialp, 1990). On the defence of Catholicism, Falangist anti-communism met the anti-communism of the Vatican, which launched a transnational anti-communist campaign through the Secretariat on Atheism, explicitly created for the aim, since the early Thirties. See Giuliana Chamedes, 'The Vatican, Nazi-Fascism, and the making of transnational anti-communism in the 1930s,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (2016): 261–290.
172. Ledesma Ramos, 'Ideas sobre el Estado,' 583. See also 'Intervención de J.A. Primo de Rivera en el Parlamento,' *Arriba* 1 (21 March 1935): 6; Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'La esclavitud de hoy' (18 July 1932), in *El estado nacional*, 51.
173. The adjective 'purple' indicates those who supported the republican cause. It refers to the purple colour of one of the three horizontal stripes forming the flag of the Spanish Second Republic. The quote is in Redondo Ortega, 'Señales del estado antinacional,' 71. See also Francisco Bravo, 'Camisas azules,' *Vértice* 4, special issue (July–August 1937); 'Justicia generosa pero sin olvido,' *Arriba* 627 (3 April 1941): 1.

174. The text of the law is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 277, 28 November 1925, 4714–4715. On this topic see also Di Nucci, *Lo Stato-partito del fascismo. Genesi, evoluzione e crisi (1919–1945)*, 281–282.
175. Roberto Pavese, 'Le tappe della Rivoluzione,' *Critica fascista* 14 (15 July 1934): 263.
176. Alfredo Rocco, 'Sulle associazioni segrete' (16 May 1925), in Alfredo Rocco, *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato liberale allo Stato fascista* (Roma: La Voce, 1927), 40.
177. Perfetti, *Il nazionalismo italiano dalle origini alla fusione col fascismo*, 266.
178. Rocco, *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato liberale allo Stato fascista*, 29.
179. Alfredo Rocco, 'Legge sulle società segrete. Relazione sul disegno di legge' (12 January 1925), in Rocco, *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato liberale allo Stato fascista*, 38.
180. Ibidem, 37–38. See also Rodolfo Briganti, 'Fascismo e Massoneria,' *Critica fascista* 1 (1 January 1924): 275–277.
181. Art. 7 of Law no. 2008 of 25 November 1926 created the TSDS. The full text of the law is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 281, 6 December 1926, Part I, 5314–5315. Cf. Santi Fedele, *La massoneria italiana nell'esilio e nella clandestinità 1927–1939* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2005).
182. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Signos del nuevo movimiento,' *Igualdad* 9 (9 January 1933): 6. See also Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Un sucio negocio masónico,' *Libertad* 10 (17 August 1931); Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Un crimen masónico,' *Libertad* 12 (31 August 1931).
183. 'España estancada' and 'La violencia y la justicia' (2 April 1933), both in José Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 165, 581.
184. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, 'La masonería tiene en nosotros un peligro,' *La Patria Libre* 2 (23 February 1935). Cf. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, 'Las Jons. Nuestras consignas,' *La Conquista del Estado* 23 (24 October 1931): 1.
185. Javier Domínguez Arribas, *El enemigo judeo-masónico en la propaganda franquista (1936–1945)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2009), 180–184. See also Ricardo Manuel Martín de la Guardia, 'Falange y Masonería durante la Segunda República: Hacia la configuración del modelo de contubernio,' in *Masonería, revolución y reacción. Vol. I. IV Simposio Internacional de Historia de la Masonería Española*, ed. José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Diputación provincial de Alicante, 1990), 49–511.
186. A first measure had already been taken with the edict of 15 October 1936, signed by the General Commander of the Canarian Islands Ángel

- Dolla Lahoz. It banned freemasonry and other secret organisations, terming all activities related to them ‘crimes of rebellion’. The text of the edict is in *Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Santa Cruz de Tenerife*, no. 125, 16 October 1936. On 21 December 1938, a new decree imposed the elimination of all masonic inscriptions, symbols and documents, including those in the churches and cemeteries of the nationalist zone within a period of two months.
187. In Article no. 4, letter i, there was an exception for those who had abandoned freemasonry voluntarily before 18 July 1936 and for those who had been expelled from it for having acted against the masonic principles. The full text of the ‘Ley de 9 de Febrero de 1939 de Responsabilidades Políticas’ is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 44, 13 February 1939, 824–847. The quote is on page 825.
 188. ‘Ley de 1 de Marzo de 1940 sobre represión de la masonería y del comunismo,’ in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 62, 2 March 1940, 1537–1539. The quote is on page 1537.
 189. Ibidem, 1537. See also Jaime Ruiz Manent, ‘La masonería y la guerra,’ *Destino* 140 (23 March 1940): 2. Cf. Domínguez Arribas, *El enemigo judeo-masónico en la propaganda franquista (1936–1945)*, 315–322.
 190. The information about the Special Court and the *excusas absolutorias* are, respectively, in art. 12 and 10 of ‘Ley de 1 de Marzo de 1940 sobre represión de la masonería y del comunismo,’ 1539.
 191. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 167; Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 163–167.
 192. Pavese, ‘Le tappe della Rivoluzione,’ 263.
 193. José Luis De Arrese, ‘Discurso a las jerarquías de Andalucía en Malaga’ (21 June 1942), in *Escritos y discursos*, ed. José Luis De Arrese (Madrid: Ediciones de la Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular, 1943), 156.
 194. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista. II. L’organizzazione dello Stato fascista (1925–1929)* (Milano: Einaudi, 1965), 114.
 195. Benito Mussolini, ‘Fatto compiuto,’ *Il Popolo d’Italia* 184 (3 August 1921): 1.
 196. Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), 143.
 197. Mussolini, ‘Fatto compiuto,’ 1.
 198. Di Nucci, ‘Lo Stato fascista e gli italiani “antinazionali”,’ 127.
 199. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 160.
 200. Ibidem. Cf. also Galli della Loggia, *La morte della patria*, 277; Di Nucci, *Lo Stato-partito del fascismo. Genesi, evoluzione e crisi (1919–1945)*, 277.
 201. Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007), 247.
 202. ‘Il discorso dell’Ascensione,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXII, 360–390. The quotes are on 378.

203. Ibidem, 378.
204. Ibidem, 379.
205. 'Tutto è nello Stato,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 221 (15 September 1929): 2.
206. Ibidem.
207. Ibidem.
208. 'Il discorso dell'Ascensione,' 380. Although the afascists were tolerated, they did not enjoy certain benefits that the regime reserved exclusively to the Fascists. On this point, see Di Nucci, *Lo Stato-partito del fascismo. Genesi, evoluzione e crisi (1919-1945)*, 442.
209. Alfredo Rocco 'Sulla dispensa dal servizio dei funzionari dello Stato' (19 June 1925), in *La trasformazione dello Stato. Dallo Stato Liberale allo Stato Fascista*, 85.
210. Giovanni Gentile, 'La costituzionalizzazione del Gran Consiglio Fascista,' *Educazione fascista* 1 (January 1928): 86-87.
211. Nino D'Arma, *Il popolo nel fascismo* (Roma: Casa editrice Pinciana, 1932), 88.
212. Manlio Barberito, 'Partito Nazionale Fascista,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 385-389.
213. 'Il Partito,' *Critica fascista* 2 (15 November 1939): 19.
214. Starace's words are in Emilio Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo* (Roma: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1995), 196.
215. The data are in *Il Popolo d'Italia* 302 (29 October 1939): 1. See Di Nucci, 'Lo Stato fascista e gli italiani "antinazionali",' 175-176.
216. The figures for the number of affiliates to the Falange are rather vague. Some recent studies regarding local sections of the FE de las JONS provide more accurate data on party members within some *Comunidades Autónomas* (Autonomous Communities). Nevertheless, no registers with data on a national basis are available, probably because they disappeared or were destroyed during the change of regime after the death of Franco in 1975. However, some valid indications are in Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrió, *Falange Española: historia de un fracaso (1933-1945)* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 2009), 75-77, 396-397. According to the data that Peñalba reported, it was plausible that there were around 150,000 affiliates to the party in June 1936. They progressively increased to such a degree that, in December 1941, the Falange counted 2,242,512 members on a total population of around 26 million.
217. Ramón Serrano Súñer, *Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar* (Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1947), 32. Cf. Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 131-132.
218. Serrano Súñer, *Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar*, 32.
219. Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 124-125.

220. The problem of the growing popularity of the Falangist militias had already been contained in December 1936 when a decree ordered their militarisation together with the Carlist militias, and their total subordination to the Army. In Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 132.
221. Gallego, *El evangelio fascista. La formación de la cultura política del franquismo (1930–1950)*, 420.
222. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 126–128.
223. Dionisio Ridruejo, *Escrito en España* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1964), 76.
224. The text of the Unification Decree no. 255 is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 182, 20 April 1937, 1033–1034. The quote is on page 1034.
225. Ibidem, 1034. On the path that led to the promulgation of the Unification Decree see Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 130–146; Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 123–141.
226. The term *Movimiento* appears ‘hastily’ for the first time in the Unification Decree of 20 April 1937. Later, it was widely resumed in the decree approving the Statutes of the FET de las JONS, published in August of the same year. See Decree no. 333, in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 291, 7 August 1937, 2738–2742.
227. Ibidem.
228. Joan Maria Thomàs, ‘La Unificación: conyuntura y proyecto de futuro,’ in *Falange, las culturas políticas del fascismo en la España de Franco (1936–1975)*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2013), 169–177. A more detailed analysis can be found in Joan Maria Thomàs, *Lo que fue la Falange. La Falange y los falangistas de José Antonio, Hedilla y la Unificación. Franco y el fin de la Falange Española de las JONS* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1999). See also, among others, Francisco Morente Valero, ‘Hijos de un Dios menor. La Falange después de José Antonio,’ in *Fascismo en España*, eds. Ferrán Gallego y Francisco Morente (Barcelona: El viejo topo, 2005), 211–250.
229. Griffin, *The nature of fascism*, 123–124.
230. Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 285.
231. Decree no. 255 is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 182, 20 April 1937, 1034; Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 143.
232. In reality, it was window dressing. For instance, according to Article 41 of the Statutes of the FET y de las JONS, the *Consejo Nacional* should have decided on the ‘primordial lines’ of the state structure and the *Movimiento Nacional*, rules regarding trade unions, great international issues and all national issues that Franco brought to its attention. Concretely, it exercised an advisory function, being in charge of providing non-binding opinions to the *Jefe Nacional* who appointed all members of the assembly (in a number between 25 and 50) on a discretionary basis. The Grand Council of Italian Fascism formally inspired

- the *Consejo Nacional*. Nonetheless, the latter did not have substantial decision-making power and reflected the heterogeneity of the political forces within the regime. It never played the role of exclusive representative of Spanish fascists, having among its members also Carlists, monarchists, conservatives and army generals. With the *Ley de Organización del Estado* of 1941, Serrano Súñer tried to give this organ a political role that was similar to Mussolini's Grand Council, but his attempt was in vain. The many components within Francoism, which did not want the realisation of a fascist regime, immediately buried the project. See *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 291, 7 August 1937, 2738–2742. Cf. also Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 150; Miguel Ángel Giménez Martínez, 'El Gran Consejo Nacional del Movimiento: la "cámara de las ideas del franquismo",' *Investigaciones históricas* 35 (2015): 271–298.
233. Crucially, in this way, Franco ensured the subordination of the Falangist Delegation of Propaganda to the state. It was not conceivable that the single party could act independently from the regime. For this reason, for instance, Falangist publications that were considered improper were in some cases subjected to military censorship. José Andrés Gallego and Luis De Llera, '¿Cruzada o guerra civil? El primer gran debate del régimen de Franco,' in *Chiesa cattolica e guerra civile in Spagna nel 1936*, ed. Mario Tedeschi (Napoli: Guida, 1989), 115–116.
 234. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 161. See also Paul Preston, *The politics of revenge: Fascism and the military in twentieth-century Spain* (London: Routledge, 1995), 113.
 235. Payne, *Falange. Historia del fascismo español*, 143–144.
 236. Ridruejo, *Escrito en España*, 87.
 237. Ibidem.
 238. Dionisio Ridruejo, 'La patria como síntesis,' *Arriba* 493 (29 October 1940): 11. Cf. 'Manifiesto editorial,' *Escorial* 1 (November 1940): 3.
 239. Ridruejo, 'La patria como síntesis,' 11.
 240. Ibidem.
 241. Salvador Lissarrangue Novoa, 'Lo nacional y lo falangista,' *Arriba* 517 (26 November 1940): 2.
 242. The text of the order is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 379, 3 November 1937, 4156–4157.
 243. Saz Campos, *Fascismo y franquismo*, 161; Di Nucci, *Lo Stato-partito del fascismo. Genesi, evoluzione e crisi (1919–1945)*, 445.
 244. See Kathleen Richmond, *Women and Spanish Fascism: The women's section of the Falange 1934–1959* (London: Routledge, 2003), 14–45, 66–80.
 245. Ridruejo, *Escrito en España*, 85.
 246. Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century, Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network*, 18–21.

247. The decree of approval of the *Fuero del Trabajo* is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 505, 10 March 1938, 6178–6181. On the topic, see also Glicerio Sánchez Recio, 'Corporatism and the Franco dictatorship in Spain,' in *Corporatism and Fascism: The corporatist wave in Europe*, ed. Antonio Costa Pinto (London: Routledge, 2017), 198–215.
248. On the influence of Italian Fascist corporatism on the *Fuero del Trabajo*, see Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network*, 43–44.
249. Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, *Testimonio, recuerdos y reflexiones* (Madrid: Dyrsa, 1985), 194. Cf. Javier Rodrigo, 'On fascistisation: Mussolini's political project for Franco's Spain, 1937–1939,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 4 (2017): 481.
250. 'Fuero del Trabajo,' 6180. The text of the *Ley de 26 de Enero de 1940 sobre Unidad sindical* is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 31, 31 January 1940, 772–773.
251. The first autonomous trade unions of the JONS date back to the beginning of 1933. After them, the *Sindicato Español Universitario* (University Spanish Union or SEU) was founded in November of the same year. The *Centrales Obreras Nacional-sindicalistas* (National Syndicalist Workers' Centres) were created in 1934, and a year later it was the turn of the *Centrales de Empresarios Nacional-sindicalistas* (National Syndicalist Entrepreneurs' Centres). Such organisations included respectively university students, workers and business owners affiliated with the party. However, they were unable to exert real pressure on the republican government and often had to operate in clandestine conditions. On this topic see Silvia López Gallegos, 'El proyecto de sindicalismo falangista: de los sindicatos autónomos jonsistas a la creación de las centrales obreras y de empresarios nacional sindicalistas (1931–1938),' in *Fascismo en España*, 43–67. Specifically on the SEU, see Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, *El Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), 1939–1965. La socialización política de la juventud universitaria en el franquismo* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1996).
252. Ridruejo, *Escrito en España*, 207.



CHAPTER 3

The Imperial Destiny of the Nation

A NATURAL EVOLUTION

For fascism, the trend towards the empire – that is, towards the expansion of the nation – is a manifestation of vitality. Its opposite is a sign of decadence: people who rise, and rise again, are imperialist; people who die are defeatist.¹

Mussolini's words are emblematic of the importance that the imperial issue played in fascism, and must have inspired the General Secretary of the Falange, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, when he asserted in 1938 that 'the people who have no imperial will is destined to perish'.² The practical realisation of an empire was undoubtedly a challenging goal to accomplish. Nonetheless, it was a mistake to 'abandon in advance the desire to achieve it' since the imperial ambition represented 'an inherent condition for the very existence of nations' without which the latter 'disintegrate[d] and [fell] into localisms'.³ These statements reveal the almost physiological nature of the bond connecting the empire with the nation for Italian and Spanish fascisms. As the nation transcended the contingent reality of the state and embodied the spiritual and moral essence of the people, the empire—going beyond the nation—represented its next evolutionary stage, namely its enhancement and affirmation in the world. Thus, if for Fascism and Falangism the nation was the 'maximum social reality' to

which everything else was subordinate, the empire was its perfection, that is, the extraterritorial expression of its power.⁴

Such assertions do not imply that the nationalist phenomenon was imperialist *per se* at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within the heterogeneous Italian nationalism, for instance, there were those who, like Giuseppe Prezzolini, gave absolute priority to the resolution of domestic problems over reckless expansionist whims.⁵ Similarly, among the fathers of Spanish nationalist thought, figures such as Ángel Ganivet believed that Spain should regenerate internally. All the national vitality had to be concentrated within the state and not in any risky colonial adventure, which had brought the country to ruin in the past.⁶ Nonetheless, fascist nationalism, including its Italian and Spanish manifestations, was certainly imperialist and not only in a rhetorical sense. Fascist and Falangist discourses on the empire were not empty chatter generated from the delusions of grandeur and megalomaniacal tendencies of some prominent party figures. On the contrary, fascist imperialism constituted the natural evolution of an authentically revolutionary political culture that, while trying to achieve the greatness of the nation, inevitably ended up seeking affirmation and prestige even beyond narrow state boundaries. Based on this assumption, PNF ideologues and Falange theorists expressed their views on the empire, which were articulated according to their particular timing and modalities.

As Emilio Gentile suggests, the fact that the Blackshirts' nationalism in Italy would have sooner or later led to imperialism was predictable from the birth of the movement.⁷ Already in March 1919, Mussolini affirmed that imperialism was 'the foundation of life for every people that tends to expand economically and spiritually' and claimed for Italy its 'place in the world'.⁸ In February 1921, he encouraged his supporters in Trieste to raise the 'flag of the empire' and Fascist imperialism.⁹ In June 1925, during the Fourth National Congress of the PNF held in Rome, he went so far as to identify the imperial concept as 'the basis' of his party's doctrine.¹⁰

Although the theme of the empire was present in Fascism from its origins, for several years it did not form a central element of its political discourse. In the beginning, the party's expansionist dreams were still sketchy. They mainly revolved around vague plans for the creation of a 'Great Italy' and the desire for power sparked by the First World War. However, it could not have been any different in the initial phase of the movement, since there were much more severe problems to face

on the internal front. As has been seen in the previous chapter, at first the Blackshirts directed all their efforts towards elimination of the oppositions and the realisation of the Fascist state. Only when these objectives were accomplished did the PNF imperial designs re-emerge with renewed strength and extraordinary determination. Thus, Mussolini decided to look beyond the boundaries of the peninsula towards new and more ambitious goals.

Once again, the Fascists drew on the tradition of the *Risorgimento* to legitimise their projects by representing themselves as the successors of the patriotic generation that had exalted Italian moral primacy and claimed for the country a leading role on the world stage. As Giuseppe Bottai pointed out, in Italy the colonial idea arose later than in other European states. When the great wars for hegemony and empire were under way, 'foreign tyrannies' still oppressed Italy, which was incapable of 'acting as a nation' because it had to fight 'to become a nation'.¹¹ In the historical reconstruction of the ideologues close to Mussolini, it was during the *Risorgimento* that some enlightened political individuals began to appreciate the importance of pursuing a dynamic foreign policy. Thus, even before unification, Cavour tried, in 1851, to increase Savoy's commercial presence in the Mediterranean basin, boosting trade with Tunisia. Four years later, with the Piedmontese state taking part in the Crimean War, the statesman managed to enter the European diplomatic assembly and clarified that the Kingdom of Savoy would develop its economic interests in the Near East.¹²

PNF intellectuals identified some elements of a colonial doctrine also in Mazzini and the sacred mission of civilisation he ascribed to Italy. It is questionable whether the Genovese patriot sought to pave the way for a more decisive expansionist state policy. Nonetheless, party theorists must have found particularly interesting Mazzini's article dating back to March 1871, in which he claimed a vital role for Italy in Asia and northern Africa, especially in Tunisia and in Libya.¹³ Analogously, in the opinion of Carlo Curcio, professor at the Fascist Faculty of Political Sciences in Perugia, Vincenzo Gioberti and Cesare Balbo also contributed to the cause of the empire. The former emphasised the idea of Italian civil and moral primacy, and demanded control over Corsica and Malta for its country. The latter hoped for the birth of a great Catholic and Mediterranean civilisation, with Rome at its centre.¹⁴

According to a Fascist interpretation, the colonialists of the late nineteenth century assimilated the ideal legacy of these illustrious men. In particular, Francesco Crispi proved the most capable political actor of the unified state. He projected Italy into the Mediterranean area and gave it an authentic 'imperialistic soul and thought'.¹⁵ He was credited with having opposed the 'small, anguished, miserable conception that [had] inspired the colonial politics' until then, and used the military campaign in Eritrea and Ethiopia to revive Italian power.¹⁶ Nonetheless, for PNF ideologues, the presence of a vile and defective ruling class ended up dooming Crispi's adventure in Abyssinia. The Battle of Adua, as Bottai wrote, 'like Caporetto, like every misfortune of the fatherland, [found] in Parliament its prophets, [...] its propitiators'.¹⁷ The Italian defeat of 1 March 1896 opened the way for the era of Giovanni Giolitti and the 'cohort of gnomes', leaving the country indolent and discouraged.¹⁸

At the beginning of the twentieth century, some party intellectuals saw in the publications of Mario Morasso, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Alfredo Oriani—who revived the idea of the primacy of Italy in the world—proof that the Italian imperialist tradition had never faded. Prominent figures of Italian nationalism, such as Enrico Corradini, Luigi Federzoni, Roberto Cantalupo and Francesco Coppola, in turn, retrieved this tradition and forcefully brought the theme of colonial expansion back to the centre stage of political debate.¹⁹ The founder of the weekly *Il Regno*, Corradini, asserted in 1908 that imperialism was a 'state of the nation', that is, a 'state of exuberance, vitality, and strength'.²⁰ Thus, after the end of the Italian–Turkish conflict of 1911–12, he rejoiced in that colonial success and expressed his pride at seeing triumphant Roman civilisation reappear on Libyan soil after 1500 years.²¹

It was the Rome of the Caesars, the one that Corradini alluded to, and it was precisely 'the sensitivity and the consciousness of the genius of Rome and the Empire' that he recalled for Italians, anticipating what PNF ideologues would do some years later.²² According to the latter, this sensitivity and consciousness were finally 'rooted, clarified, and developed in the people' with Fascism to the point that they became two cornerstones of the regime.²³ The reality was that, once again, Fascism drew from nationalist thought to guarantee the necessary doctrinal basis to justify its own ideological and political choices. The construction of the Fascist myth of a Caesarean Roman spirit was the emblem of the bright destiny of the country. It constituted a powerful tool to legitimise the expansionist

projects of Mussolini, who was gloriously portrayed as the ‘new Augustus of a reborn imperial Italy’.²⁴

However, the cult of ancient Rome and its empire—as Gentile stresses—was not just the ‘grotesque expression of the Fascist factory of ideological emptiness’.²⁵ Such an interpretation seems reductive and simplistic. Beyond the rhetoric, the *camicie nere* did not use that radiant past for ‘reactionary nostalgia’ or ‘antiquarian veneration’ but re-elaborated it in a modern way to forge Italy’s political future.²⁶ Through an ‘unscrupulous anti-historicist manipulation of the history of Rome’, they established a diachronic ideal bridge between the Caesars’ mythical imperium and the Duce’s empire, which had as its mission to spread Fascist universal principles on a global scale.²⁷ After all, the Fascist nation was ‘an ethical reality that exist[ed] and live[d] inasmuch as it develop[ed]’.²⁸ The fact that it would project itself internationally at some point in its existence was the logical consequence of the state of permanent mobilisation in which the party held the Italians, or at least the majority of them. By working hard to build a Fascist homeland—a fighting community in which there was no trace of the Old Italy—it was somehow inevitable that the myth of the nation would merge with the myth of the imperial civilisation.²⁹ The new PNF nation would have brought ‘discipline wherever [there was] disorder and an evident or veiled rebellion’.³⁰ Against the ‘absurdity of the internationalist myth’, both in its democratic and socialist versions, Fascism wanted to establish a peaceful hierarchical order among states.³¹ Mussolini’s Italy—which was ‘potentially and by right empire’—would have led it by its ‘pure and universal ideal’, overcoming ‘every limitation of tradition and church’ and promoting harmony between people through the ‘power of the spirit and weapons’.³²

A conceptual fine tuning of the relationship between the nation and the empire appears in the PNF *Political Dictionary*, where Curcio defined nationalism as the ‘intrinsic expansive vitality of a civilisation’ and as ‘exaltation, active consciousness, duty’ of the nation in history.³³ There was no contradiction between the nation and the empire, unlike what most of the old ruling class had asserted. In the first 60 years of the unified state, liberal governments had preferred to adopt a defensive tactic based on ‘nullness’ and a good dose of ‘parasitism’ rather than a dynamic and enterprising policy.³⁴ On the contrary, for Fascism, the nation and the empire were not only compatible but also complemented each other perfectly

since, as Roberto Pavese claimed, the only and authentic nation was the one that had ‘virtually the empire in itself’.³⁵

The considerations of PNF theorists went as far as to investigate the essential elements for realising this mythical imperial civilisation. Party linguist and philosopher Antonino Pagliaro identified two. First, a universal idea was needed, a guiding principle to govern the political, social and civil configuration of the country and that could be successfully applied in different spatial and temporal contexts. This was the case of the Fascist doctrine, and the Italian people—who had reached a ‘high perfection of culture, organisation and cohesion’—had to become its evangelist.³⁶ However, a universal idea was not enough per se. An imperial conscience, that is, complete faith in the ‘human, non-contingent and transient value’ of the principles underlying the nation, had to support it.³⁷ The Blackshirts firmly believed in the superiority of the ‘Italic civilisation’ and the importance of their task: ‘to make their world and their political and social victories a moment in world history and a good for all peoples’.³⁸

Fascist theorists were certain that building an empire would also have brought several immediate and tangible advantages. From an economic point of view, it would have secured markets for Italian production and supplied raw materials lacking in the country.³⁹ On the other hand, party intellectuals presented colonisation as an effective solution to the problem of population growth in Italy. While the regime encouraged people to pursue the greatness of the country and to offer children to the fatherland through pronatalist policies, Italians had to deal with limited resources practically. Colonial settlements seemed to provide a way of considerably reducing the ‘demographic exuberance’ within the peninsula.⁴⁰ The Fascist government promised decent homes to metropolitan citizens willing to relocate and a source of employment in terms of land to cultivate. The 20,000 farmers who disembarked in Tripoli in November 1938 were only a small proportion of them, considering that the regime planned to settle about 500,000 Italians on the Libyan coast alone.⁴¹ The benefit of this policy of colonisation would have been twofold. It would have stopped Italian emigration abroad, which was seen as a disaster and a loss of national energy.⁴² Most of all, it would have consolidated Fascist control over African territories by introducing an enormous mass of settlers. The latter would have reduced the Indigenous population to a minority and transformed those native lands into authentic Italian provinces, in so doing literally expanding the nation.⁴³

The party media never tired of repeating that Fascism would not execute a policy of colonial exploitation. Its imperialism differed from the aggressive imperialism of ANI nationalists since it aspired to assume a strong ethical character. Officially, PNF ideologues always rejected—at least in words—the idea of colonialism imposed by force of arms and based on the desire to humiliate Indigenous people, which they associated with the German and English powers.⁴⁴ The ‘integral’ Fascist empire would not only be a ‘territorial or military or mercantile expression, but a spiritual and moral one’.⁴⁵ According to Mussolini, his nation was so strong in its history, culture and political maturity that it would lead other nations ‘without having to conquer one square kilometre of territory’.⁴⁶ The regime would have carried out its colonising plans with humanity and a deep charitable spirit to export a higher order of life and bring wealth to populations that were considered inferior.

Party propaganda went as far as to exalt the Duce as the defender of those people, as happened when the celebrations held in Tripoli on 18 March 1937 were reported. Mussolini received the ‘sword of Islam’, a ceremonial white weapon that he wielded on the back of a black horse in an authoritative and proud attitude as ‘protector’ of all Arabs.⁴⁷ This image, immortalised by the regime’s media, was incredibly evocative. Once the process of reforming Italians and creating the New Man of Fascism within state borders was complete, the Blackshirts would continue their educational task in less developed foreign civilisations. Presenting themselves as modern missionaries in fez and musket, they were to ‘fascistically evangelise’ the Indigenous peoples and teach them to obey the principles of the PNF revolution.⁴⁸

As contemporary historiography has revealed, the image of benevolent Fascist colonialism is a long way from the reality. The regime resorted to all the tools at its disposal to realise its imperialist ambitions. Although Italy had signed an international treaty in Geneva in June 1925 prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons, Mussolini approved the use of poison gas to systematically spread terror among the native population, first in Libya and later in Ethiopia. In February 1936, he suggested that the Commissioner of Italian East Africa, General Pietro Badoglio, employ infectious agents to eradicate all resistance.⁴⁹ This conduct negated any claim to a kind Fascism and was even more execrable than unnecessary, considering that an advanced army of a European nation-state—as was the Italian army—was fighting poorly organised and equipped local guerrillas. Nevertheless, Mussolini’s regime not only

resorted to terror to obtain recognition of its colonising role. It also pursued this aim through non-violent means, as demonstrated with the creation of the *Gioventù Araba del Littorio* (Arab Youth of Littorio or GAL) in 1935. Equivalent to the Opera Nazionale Balilla and the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio, it guaranteed the spiritual and material support of the party to Libyans.⁵⁰ Italo Balbo, Governor of Libya from 1934 to 1940, actively promoted it in order to impart political, military and moral education to youngsters and instil in them a sense of attachment to the Fascist Italian motherland.⁵¹

On 22–23 May 1936, the periodical *L'Azione Coloniale* reported on one of the GAL's indoctrination activities. A front-page article gave a comprehensive account of its participation in the Imperial Day celebration that was taking place in Rome. Some members of the Arab Youth of Littorio sailed to Naples arriving in the capital on a special train to join the event, where they paid homage to King Vittorio Emanuele III and the Duce. The article described that they marched 'martially' in front of Mussolini on the Street of the Empire, demonstrating efficiency in their military demeanour, and that they intoned the song '*Giovinezza*' ('Youth') in an atmosphere of euphoria and jubilation. This was a new version of the famous Fascist song, which they interpreted according to Arabic style, partially modifying the lyrics and the music that 'spontaneously degenerated into a monotonous tune of an authentic local colour'.⁵²

The article evidently had propagandist intent. Nonetheless, its significance lies in the detailed description of a cross-section of the Italian colonial reality which saw it as essential to inculcate in the Indigenous populations a love of Italy—their adopted homeland—and devotion to the regime. For party ideologues, the two things were not distinct but went hand in hand. If Fascism and nation coincided and the empire was the extraterritorial extension of the nation, it goes without saying that empire and Fascism coincided too. Such a process of identification would secure the Blackshirts the exclusive representation not only of their country but also of the annexed imperial possessions. Thus, it is not surprising that the regime devoted time and energy to regimenting young Berbers through party organisations who not only had little knowledge of what Fascism was but also knew very little about Italy. PNF ideologues considered this operation extremely profitable since it would infuse a sense of belonging in the natives towards their colonisers and consolidate Fascist success in the colonial administration.

If for Italian Fascism it was a matter of creating a bond between the motherland and the empire *ex novo*, Falangist theorists were confident that a special connection between Spain and its former overseas territories had survived even after the disaster of 1898. Four centuries of colonial domination could not be wiped out in a single blow, not even in the face of the heavy defeat of Spain at the hands of the United States. Spanish influence, especially in Latin America, had been so strong and pervasive in Indigenous societies that it could not be easily eliminated. This is particularly the case considering that, starting from the reign of Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, the *conquistadores* (conquerors) not only imposed their economic and commercial presence but also acted as true apostles of Hispanic culture in all occupied territories.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Spain heeded the '*llamada de lo Universal*' ('call of the Universal'), according to the Falangist theorist Antonio Tovar who was responsible for national radio in 1938 and was Under-Secretary for Press and Propaganda in 1940–41.⁵³ It embraced its universal vocation consciously with the primary aim of spreading worldwide the values of the *Hispanidad* (Hispanicness), that is, the Spanish language, culture and spirituality.⁵⁴ Taking as a model the ancient Capitoline empire, which extended its hegemony to the Mediterranean under the banner of the *pax romana*, Spain succeeded in uniting a vast multi-racial community of men and women harmoniously under the Catholic Kings' emblem of the yoke and the arrows.⁵⁵ This glorious empire flourished during the reign of Charles V, but began its descending parabola in the seventeenth century. According to National Syndicalist ideologues, the decline was due to the moral degeneration of Spain and the absence of the imperial vigour that had animated the epic overseas feats of the past. Tovar pointed to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648—which gave birth to the modern international system—not only as the ratification of the end of Spanish dominion in the Netherlands but also as the beginning of national tragedy. From that moment on, a slow but inexorable process of impoverishment characterised the political life of the country for over two centuries. First the War of Succession and then the Napoleonic invasion forced Spain to leave all its possessions in the Old Continent. In the nineteenth century, with the loss of colonies in the New World, it became clear that the decline of the illustrious empire founded 150 years earlier was unstoppable.⁵⁶

At first glance, this reconstruction may seem nothing but a melancholy and anachronistic re-enactment of a legendary past in which 'in the world,

orders were given in Spanish and people obeyed in Castilian'.⁵⁷ On the contrary, it was a real declaration of intent by the men of the Falange who looked with pride at that great imperial heritage and were determined to reap it. Using history as a 'politic engine', the Blueshirts identified 'vitality' as the distinctive trait of the nation since they were sure that Spain still had 'something to do in the world'.⁵⁸ In their view, 'winds saturated with constitutions, encyclopaedism, Roussonian theories, liberal myths' and with 'secret orders, masonic hideouts and treasons against the fatherland' had failed to undermine the country's original spirit of conquest.⁵⁹ After centuries of disorder, the Catholic Kings created the first modern nation-state and imposed their colonial supremacy on previously unexplored continents. Similarly, after years of republican and socialist anarchy, the Falange—with its renewed emblem of the yoke and arrows—was to restore Spanish prestige and return to the people 'the tension and dignity of empire' it deserved.⁶⁰

Unlike Italian Fascism, the theme of the empire was a central component of the ideological universe of Falangism from the beginning. Starting with Giménez Caballero, Ledesma Ramos and José Antonio Primo de Rivera, all party theorists identified in the imperial projection of the nation one of their most important political goals. It was not by chance that the third of the 27 programmatic points of the FE de las JONS stated peremptorily: 'We have the will of Empire. We affirm that the historical achievement of Spain is the Empire.'⁶¹ The founder of the Falange further developed this guiding idea in a parliamentary speech on 30 November 1934:

Spain does not exist because it has its language, because it is a race, or because it is a collection of customs. The essence of Spain lies in an imperial vocation to unite languages, races, peoples and customs in a universal destiny.⁶²

Ismael Saz observes that, ultimately, José Antonio's missionary nationalism resolved itself into the ideal notion of empire.⁶³ It was the firm belief of the Falangist leader that 'nations are determined from the outside'.⁶⁴ The same concept of *unidad de destino en lo universal* implied that the revival of the Spanish fatherland had to be accompanied by the realisation of a collective mission in the world and a significant outward expansion project. Primo de Rivera summed up this thought masterfully in these famous words:

We do not have to see in the fatherland the stream and the lawn, the song and the bagpipe. Let us see a destiny, an endeavour. The fatherland is the one that formed a collective endeavour in the world. Without endeavour, there is no fatherland. Without the presence of faith in a shared destiny, everything dissolves in native regions, in local flavours and colours.⁶⁵

For Falangist theorists, the empire was not just a synonym for prestige and grandeur; it also represented an authoritative source of aggregation. Overcoming narrow state boundaries, it constituted a formidable tool for solving the problem of regional separatisms that threatened the territorial unity of the country. Moreover, it encouraged citizens to recognise themselves as members of the same national community and to cooperate in realising a tremendous joint mission of high spiritual value. In 1938, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta wrote in the periodical *Vértice* that ‘the unity of destiny [made] the people evolve into the nation and the nation into the empire’.⁶⁶ For Spanish fascists, nation and empire were two historically inseparable and interconnected dimensions. With this conviction, they were confident that the rebirth of the homeland would correspond to a simultaneous imperial rebirth since the greatness of the nation could have been achieved only through the recovery of the empire.

The reality was that, in the 1930s, Spain went through a convulsive phase in its political history and did not have the resources to embark on such ambitious projects. This was especially true after the outbreak of the Civil War, which consumed all the energies of the nation on the internal front. When fighting ceased in April 1939, the country was on its knees. Three years of fratricidal clashes had torn the social fabric to shreds, left the state economy in pieces and razed many cities. In this context, the analysis of the Falangist imperialist discourse is particularly interesting because it provides significant insights into how the Blueshirts intended to overcome the position of second-order power held by Spain at that time. Civil War wounds were still open but this did not distract the men of the Falange from returning to the nation a highly prestigious place in the international forum. While rejecting the idea of a colonial policy based on monopoly and a protectorate—which they considered a ‘hypocritical European formula to hide ruthless exploitation’—National Syndicalists claimed the ‘right to defend Spanish civilisation in the world’.⁶⁷ Spain had to return to being the pivot of the ‘great Hispanic brotherhood’ that had brought together about 200 million individuals of different races all

over the world sharing the same language, customs, traditions and, not least, religious belief.⁶⁸

Catholicism had been decisive for the success of the conquerors' endeavours since the end of the fifteenth century. The evangelisation of Indigenous populations and their conversion to Christianity gave a symbolic and mystical significance to the colonial mandate. It was not only the manifestation of the power of the Catholic Kings' Spanish nation born from the *Reconquista*, which began to discover unexplored worlds. It was also a divine mission to spread the word of God against all sorts of heresy and paganism.⁶⁹ The Blueshirts, who declared themselves the successors of that ancient and bright empire, could not ignore the evangelical value that the overseas expeditions had assumed from the beginning. Consequently, it is not surprising that the National Syndicalist expansionist claims contained references to the Catholic tradition to which the idea of the empire, like that of the nation, was linked.

In the early 1930s, loyal supporters of the laic and totalitarian state, such as Redondo Ortega and Ledesma Ramos, also acknowledged that the greatness of the country was historically connected to its Catholic essence.⁷⁰ For his part, in 1933, Giménez Caballero declared that Spanish fascism represented the 'new catholicity in the world' and that Spain would regain its former imperial prestige and return to being the right arm of the universal Christian ideal.⁷¹ Similarly, José Antonio Primo de Rivera recalled how Spain had brought civilisation to the inhabitants of unknown continents and incorporated them into a 'universal feat of salvation' thanks to its 'sense of Catholicity'.⁷² In the opinion of the founder of the FE, this was the element that had made the country great for centuries, and this should be the starting point for rebuilding Spanish national and colonial power under the watchful eye of the Falange.⁷³

After the unification of the FE de las JONS with the traditionalists and the unleashing of anti-clerical republican fury during the Civil War, references to Catholicism increased not only in the Falangists' nationalist narrative but also in their imperialist discourse. Spanish fascism tried to integrate religion into its political thought while committing itself to preserve its revolutionary character in what Saz defines as an 'unresolved oscillation between the reaffirmation of the most orthodox submission to the principles of the Church and the most nationalistic attitudes'.⁷⁴ Thus, party historian and philosopher Pedro Laín Entralgo saw in Catholicism a 'spiritual centre' that gave 'meaning and transcendent virtue' to the unity of destiny that the Falange were to retrieve after centuries of decline.⁷⁵

Similarly, Antonio Tovar associated the imperial essence of Spain with the Catholic values of the Counter-Reformation, which he made coincide with fascist values.⁷⁶ As he wrote, in the fifteenth century the country launched itself on ‘the path of spiritual unity and the humanisation of coloured races elevated to the dignity of Christians’.⁷⁷ The empire of the Falange would do the same by preserving the Spanish language and traditions in the world and saving ‘the soul of the Hispanidad, that is, Catholicism’.⁷⁸

Nonetheless, while many National Syndicalist theorists advocated a colonial renaissance on eminently cultural and spiritual grounds, many in the party—which to all intents and purposes was born fascist and radical—promoted plans of concrete territorial expansion.⁷⁹ From the very beginning, some of the most pre-eminent Falangist ideologues envisaged the reconstruction of an empire based on strength, domination and physical occupation of the territories.⁸⁰ This happened to a greater extent between 1935 and the early 1940s, when the successes of the Axis powers were promising indicators of a future fascist international order. The Blueshirts thought they could take advantage of the redistribution of power in the Old Continent. Therefore, they promoted their projects of effective conquest both in Europe and beyond with even greater force and conviction. As they argued, real power ‘can never lack a vigorous physical reality that imposes the order on thought’.⁸¹ The empire of the Falange would not be a ‘rhetorical empire’.⁸² The *camisas azules* were not willing to live on memories of past glories, nor would they have been satisfied with some cultural pre-emption rights over former Spanish domains. Most importantly, they were not going to shirk the duties—not only moral but also practical and substantial—that their universal destiny imposed on them.⁸³

THE ROUTES OF EMPIRE

The *Political Dictionary* of the National Fascist Party put it on paper: the analogy between the Italian and the Spanish imperial condition was impressive. After a long phase of internal struggles, colonial defeats and humiliations at the international level—culminating in the ‘tragic years’ 1919–22 in Italy and the Civil War in Spain—the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts had finally acquired ‘full awareness of their historical mission in the world’.⁸⁴ Thus, they did not hesitate to announce the trajectories of their expansionist policy, which included the Mediterranean first.

Both claimed natural dominion over this basin against British and French hegemony. The *camici nere* celebrated the Italian–Spanish agreement ratifying their participation alongside Franco’s troops in the 1936–39 conflict as a good starting point for redefining the geopolitical order in that strategic area. After all, Mussolini’s support for nationalist Spain was closely tied to his win and the Fascist foreign policy strategy. A republican victory would have realised the fears of a Bolshevik revolution in Spain and made Madrid dependent on Moscow and Paris, considerably reducing Italy’s influence in the Mediterranean.⁸⁵ On the contrary, for PNF theorists and leaders, in that area, which they regarded as the ‘real metropolitan frontier’ of their country, Italy was ‘an insuppressible political reality’.⁸⁶ Since there was no possibility of colonisation beyond the Atlantic in the face of the North American superpower, it was in Africa and Asia that party ideologues envisaged their imperial projects. In those wild lands ‘once largely covered by Roman eagles’, there was still room for Italian labour ‘in the interest of civilisation’, and right there the settlers of Littorio would have begun their ‘peaceful and fruitful penetration’.⁸⁷

These convictions motivated Mussolini, who began to claim rights in critical regions of the Arab Maghreb after the March on Rome. In particular, the Duce hoped for an authoritative role for Italy in the administration of Tangier, which was not only a strategic port on the Strait of Gibraltar but also had hosted a sizeable Italian settlement for years. Although placed under international rule since 1912, the area was the subject of conflicting interests for France, Spain and Great Britain. More precisely defined regulation was needed, which is why the three European states signed a convention on 18 December 1923 that gave the French government a privileged role in the territorial and municipal management of the city. Fascist Italy, which did not join the negotiations, openly opposed the new agreement. The tense situation called for an anti-French rapprochement with Spain, resulting in further deterioration of the already complex relationships between Paris and Rome, the latter refusing to tolerate the invasive colonial policy of the Quai d’Orsay in the Mediterranean. A show of force from the Fascist government resolved the conflict four years later. As a warning shot, in October 1927 Mussolini sent three warships to Tangier, and the recognition of Italian rights over the city was officially guaranteed with the signing of a protocol on 25 July 1928.⁸⁸

Although the Moroccan dispute was solved diplomatically, it revived old disagreements between Italy and France over Tunisia. In 1881 the French protectorate had been formally established in the region, which did not please the then Italian Prime Minister Benedetto Cairoli, who had made the colonisation of the area—regarded as an appendage of the metropolitan territory—one of his government's objectives. The main problem related to the interests of the long-established Italian community, the largest in the country, which enjoyed the rights and freedoms that the capitulatory regime of September 1896 provided. When, in 1919, French authorities announced their intention of abolishing these privileges and in 1925 declared their will to 'Gallicise' more than 12,000 Italians in twelve years, tensions between Rome and Paris became palpable.⁸⁹ Mussolini was firmly determined to defend Italy's interests in the Mediterranean and resolutely intervened on the Tunisian question, this time in a strategic and pacific manner. The PNF created schools and credit institutions *in loco*, established social welfare organisations and intensified its propaganda. The goal was to gain the sympathies of the local ruling class, thus maintaining control of that crucial area so close to the west coast of Sicily.

Besides claiming questionable rights in Morocco and Tunisia, from 1923 Fascism also committed itself to consolidating Italy's presence wherever the authority of Rome had already been established, at least formally. This was the case in Libya, which became a possession of the Italian kingdom with the signing of the Lausanne Treaty on 18 October 1912, sanctioning the conclusion of the Italian–Turkish war that had begun a year earlier. Despite international recognition of Italian sovereignty in the country, several areas were not yet under the control of Rome after the end of the conflict. Although the troops sent by Giolitti—who endorsed the colonial expedition with little enthusiasm—conquered the coasts quickly and with relative ease, they encountered many obstacles in imposing Italian domination in the hinterland.⁹⁰ The situation was particularly challenging in Cyrenaica, where the Indigenous resistance of the Islamic brotherhood of Sanusiyah proved somewhat tenacious. The outbreak of the First World War complicated the already delicate situation, compromising the results achieved thus far. A large number of military units in Libya were called home to meet the needs of war, and the Italian presence in the occupied territories was drastically reduced. Many inland areas were suddenly abandoned in a disorderly manner and returned quickly to the control of native populations. About 60,000 Italian soldiers

remained in the country. Given the small number of contingents, they found themselves compelled to monitor only the coastal area and to defend themselves from the continuous attacks of Arab garrisons.⁹¹

The end of the conflict in Europe implied a return to a decisive expansionist policy. Beginning in January 1922, Bonomi's government started operations to re-conquer Libya. The fatigue and the poor organisation of the local rebels, in comparison to the greater security and speed of Italian troops, allowed the latter to obtain some quick victories. It was not until Fascism came to power in October of the same year, however, that the process of colonial expansion was accelerated, since it relied on the total support of Mussolini's executive branch. The Duce, ignoring earlier promises of peaceful penetration, did not hesitate to resort to the most despicable tools. Acts of violent repression against the population and Senussi warriors, round-ups, expropriations, use of poison gas, confinement in concentration camps and cattle slaughter were recurring practices.⁹² Giuseppe Volpi, Governor of Tripolitania from 1921 to 1925, endorsed these practices as part of General Rodolfo Graziani's military campaign to bring the whole of Libya under the control of Rome. The goal was achieved in January 1932, when the sole Governor of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, declared that all subversive activities had been crushed.⁹³ Royal Decree no. 2012 of 3 December 1934 provided for the creation of a single colony that united the two territories under Italo Balbo's general governorship. At the same time, four provincial administrative districts—Tripoli, Misrata, Benghazi and Derna—were established as well as a southern military territory responsible for controlling the Saharan area.⁹⁴

The Blackshirts enthusiastically welcomed the conclusion of the colonial endeavour in Libya, which they declared was Roman once again. The initial excitement soon gave way to more realistic considerations, however, since the country was extremely poor, predominantly desert and sparsely populated.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, PNF ideologues were mainly interested in the capacity of the territory to absorb the growing 'metropolitan energies' to be employed in large and medium-sized farms deliberately created by the regime using state funding.⁹⁶ Moreover, for party theorists, the completion of the conquest of Libya represented a further Fascist victory where the old liberal ruling class had failed. Thus, they proudly announced that Fascism had finally gained control over the Italian 'fourth shore', alluding to the 1800 kilometres of Tripolitanian and Cyrenaic coast overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

Alongside efforts to valorise the Libyan possessions, the *camicie nere* looked to the Dodecanese islands as a new direction for their expansionist foreign politics in the 1920s. This archipelago had been an Italian dominion since 1912 when Italy seized it from the Ottoman Empire after the Italian–Turkish war. However, the jurisdiction of Rome was only officially recognised in August 1924, when the Second Treaty of Lausanne entered into force.⁹⁷ In the PNF geopolitical view, control over the Dodecanese islands was indispensable for an ‘imperial and totalitarian nation’ like Italy. First, these islands were to play an important defensive role against possible attacks by Western, Balkan and Asian powers. Furthermore, they constituted a ‘base for the cultural and spiritual expansion of Italy in the Near East’ and a significant foothold for trade in that region.⁹⁸ Many Italians welcomed this accomplishment, with Fascism taking the credit for obtaining international acceptance of Italian authority in the Dodecanese and for promoting a form of superior civilisation in that possession. Once again, party propaganda celebrated Mussolini as the principal author of this achievement, which Fascist jurist and historian Renzo Sertoli Salis defined as ‘a beautiful page of our Mediterranean history’ and a further confirmation of ‘an Italian tradition in the East’ that was destined to last for centuries.⁹⁹

Some Fascist leaders, however, insisted that the ‘keys to [Italian] expansion in the world’ were in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, where the tricolour flag was already flying in some areas.¹⁰⁰ On the one hand, there was Eritrea, which became an Italian colony in 1890. It was an impoverished country of unprofitable mining operations and unproductive agricultural land.¹⁰¹ Its importance lay essentially in the port of Massawa, one of the most modern trading centres of the Red Sea. Moreover, its proximity to Ethiopia, which had been the focus of Italy’s expansionist ambitions for decades, made Eritrea a vital strategic base for launching a possible attack against its neighbour.¹⁰² On the other hand, there was Somalia, occupied by Italy in 1908 but fully controlled only in 1927, after two years of military intervention under the leadership of then Governor Cesare Maria De Vecchi, who brought about the pacification of the northern rebel sultanates.¹⁰³ Mostly poorly populated and desert, the Somali colony gained more value after the signing of the Italian–British protocol of July 1924, under which the Fascist government obtained from Great Britain the area on the right bank of the River Juba. It was part of the former British province of Jubaland, a fertile area that, according to

PNF technicians, would improve the growth of indigenous crops—mostly cotton, bananas and kapok—and livestock.¹⁰⁴

A territorial concession in a small part of the Chinese city of Tientsin, obtained by Italy after its participation in the 1901 Boxer War, completes the picture of Italian possessions at the beginning of the 1930s.¹⁰⁵ Fascist rhetoric trumpeted the importance of these domains. However, they were scarcely profitable from an agricultural or mining point of view, and it took years of intensive economic and military efforts to control and develop those resources. The dominant feeling among Fascist leaders was that Rome had been left out of a fair division of Africa. It had obtained territories that were devoid of real value, having to be content with scraps left by Paris and London. Determined to erase the image of Italy as a third-rate power, PNF theorists—who had hitherto acted in accordance with pre-Fascist foreign policy—began to delineate clearly and organically their colonialist project. It was essential to ‘carry the whole life of the nation to the plan of the Empire’, and they would do so through a long overdue conquest of Abyssinian lands to which, in their view, Italy had ‘title deeds provided by the blood spilt by its children’.¹⁰⁶

From the early 1930s, Fascist references to the empire become stronger and more frequent for a number of reasons. First, the Blackshirts felt an urgent need to restore the Italy’s lost honour and the imperial prestige that it deserved, and to direct the Fascist nation towards new and more ambitious goals. Second, there was the necessity to quickly escape the economic crisis that hit Italy as a result of the Great American Depression of 1929. Ethiopia would ensure markets for Italian exports as well as a continuous supply of raw materials, such as minerals, wheat, cotton, wool and coffee. It would also guarantee a respectable lifestyle for settlers—especially poor peasants, unemployed and unskilled workers, small provincial officials and low-ranking officers—who wished to improve their socio-economic status. Moreover, party theorists and leaders were certain that a new colonial war would be useful to rebuild the unity of the nation and to consolidate the prestige of the regime and the Duce.¹⁰⁷ Not least was the desire to finally avenge the defeat of Italy in the 1896 Battle of Adua, which more than 30 years on still ranked as an open wound in national pride.¹⁰⁸

The Fascist campaign in Abyssinia was not an unpremeditated venture by the regime. Its first political preparations dated back to 1932, when the then Minister for the Colonies Emilio De Bono drew up a report regarding a possible offensive against Ethiopia, alerting the Minister of

War, the Air Force Minister and the Governor of Eritrea to this intention. This project remained a dead letter until 1934, when the Duce began to arrange military resources to annex Ethiopia.¹⁰⁹ The Ual-Ual incident in December of the same year provided the *casus belli*, after which the party promptly set in motion its propaganda machine to convince public opinion of the urgent need to intervene and fight the army of Negus Haile Selassie.¹¹⁰ The regime's demands were facilitated by France and Great Britain, which did not want to jeopardise diplomatic relations with Mussolini's Italy in order to keep the Stresa Front united. Italy started war operations on 3 October 1935 without encountering any particular resistance from the international community. Minor economic sanctions approved by the Society of Nations in an attempt to stop the Duce's occupation plans were not only ineffective but also counterproductive. They allowed the party to attach even greater importance to the mission in Ethiopia, claiming that the honour of the homeland was at stake.¹¹¹ As Giuseppe Bottai argued, those who had 'foolishly thought of using the Ethiopian conflict as a reagent to dissociate "Fascism" from "Nation" [were] totally wrong'.¹¹² The war in Abyssinia was not just a colonial war but a 'Fascist war' and a 'national war' since it was an endeavour of the party and the people, in which 400,000 men of the regular Italian army fought and succeeded in wiping out Indigenous resistance in a short time.¹¹³

On 5 May 1936, after seven months of a military campaign, Mussolini announced the entry of Marshal Badoglio into Addis Ababa and proclaimed that Ethiopia was Italian.¹¹⁴ On 9 May of the fourteenth year of the Fascist era, the Duce welcomed the 'reappearance of the Empire on the fateful hills of Rome', which, according to its founder, bore 'the indestructible signs of the will and power of Littorio'.¹¹⁵ Enormous crowds applauded the regime and praised the Duce, who had succeeded in giving Italy the place in the sun that it deserved.¹¹⁶ In the climate of collective exaltation that arose in the country, people began to think that the Ethiopian campaign portended a more significant endeavour to be extended beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. Moving from Africa, the 'new Romanity' was to build 'a bridge from the past to the future of its empire: from the Mediterranean coast to the coast of the southern Atlantic Ocean, from Europe to South America, wherever Rome brought its idiom and faith'.¹¹⁷

While it was dreaming of transatlantic colonial expansion and continuing to advance its claims on the Dark Continent—mainly on Djibouti

and the Suez Canal—in spring 1939 Fascism conquered the ‘fifth shore’ of Italy, namely that of the Balkans.¹¹⁸ After a short occupation lasting just a few days, a constituent assembly gathered in Tirana on 12 April to offer the crown of Albania to King Vittorio Emanuele III. The following night, the Grand Council of Fascism met in an extraordinary session to celebrate the memorable event with ‘virile joy’.¹¹⁹ Seeing ‘the tricolour flag and the banner of the eagle wav[ing] next to each other’, with the same enthusiasm the President of the *Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni* (Chamber of Fasci and Corporations), Costanzo Ciano, announced that the Albanian people had ‘found its way’.¹²⁰ It was heading towards a ‘great and happy future that Imperial Rome assure[d] to it in the glorious name of the Duce’.¹²¹ With the annexation, the destiny of Albania was officially tied to ‘the sceptre of the Savoy’ and ‘the rules of the Littorio’, which after centuries had finally brought Italy back to its ‘imperial fastigium’.¹²²

Exhilarated by this colonial success, after initial hesitation Mussolini entered the Second World War alongside his National Socialist ally to extend Italian Fascist dominion on a continental scale. The ‘parallel war’ waged by the *camicie nere*, to which Hitler’s Germany had contributed substantially, led to considerable results in the short term. With the shameful Battle of the Alps in June 1940, Italy gained control over several French municipalities along its western border. During the campaign in Greece launched on 28 October of the same year, it occupied a large part of the Balkans, together with most of the Greek territory and its islands. In November 1942, Italian Fascist forces added Corsica and eight districts in the south-eastern part of France, including the Principality of Monaco, to the spoils of war.¹²³ However, the developing conflict soon showed all the weakness of the Fascist machine. The myth of Italian military superiority turned out to be unfounded, and the parallel war appeared for what it really was: a significant miscalculation of Fascist imperialism. It ended in abject failure in the summer of 1943. Internally divided, without popular consensus and checked by the Allied powers, the regime collapsed, and the empire to which the Blackshirts had devoted so much energy fell with it.

At that time, the fascist parabola in Europe had already entered its declining phase. Until just before this moment, however, those who looked to Mussolini’s Italy as a model saw in its colonial endeavours proof of the fascist effectiveness in foreign policy. The Falangists were no exception, and in 1935 they expressed strong opposition towards the

economic sanctions that the Spanish republican government had adopted against Italy while praising Mussolini's regime for carrying out a masterful work of civilisation towards the 'wild' Ethiopians.¹²⁴ Admiration of the imperial achievements in Abyssinia fostered the ambitions of the *camisas azules*. Thus, they declared themselves even more determined to revive a real empire, certain that once the internal crisis was over and the dignity of the nation was restored to the people, there were infinite possibilities in the international arena for Spain.¹²⁵

National Syndicalist ideologues and leaders began to make territorial demands right from the beginning of their movement, confident that the realisation of the new Jonsist and Falangist state would soon turn their projects of conquest into reality. These included the annexation of Vasconia in southwest France. Party theorists considered this region contiguous with the territory and population of the Basque country, with which it was to merge. The Falangist expert in colonial studies, José María Cordero Torres, summed up this position in 1934. He asserted that 'the border divide[d] an identical landscape: the same faces, the same blood'.¹²⁶ They were all '*Euskeras*, that is non-Romanised Spaniards', which led him to conclude that the 'French Basque country [...] had to be Spanish' to all intents and purposes.¹²⁷ Analogous claims concerned the Principality of Andorra, a small state near Catalonia in the eastern Pyrenees, which Falangists wanted to bring back under exclusive Spanish control after a pact with France in 1278 had established the joint authority of the two countries over this territory. The Roussillon and High Cerdanya regions, both historically belonging to the Aragonian crown and the Principedom of Catalonia, had been ceded to France with the Pyrenees Treaty in 1659. Their repossession would complete the territorial unity of Spain.¹²⁸

If these were the closest and most immediate objectives of the National Syndicalists, their expansionist plans included much more ambitious goals. The unification of the Iberian Peninsula under the emblem of the yoke and arrows of the Falange was undoubtedly among them. The first statements in this regard date from 1931, when Ramiro Ledesma Ramos promoted the Spanish annexation of Portugal in *La Conquista del Estado*, which constituted a leitmotif in his writings.¹²⁹ He was certain that the two countries were made up of a 'unique people that, after a romantic period of national independence, [could] and [had] to merge into an empire'.¹³⁰ He legitimised these imperialist ambitions as a mission of salvation. Spain would free Portugal from a 'militaristic tyranny that was

dishonouring' it and from the serious threat of an imminent 'sovietisation'.¹³¹ It was a moral obligation for Spain to 'prevent the noble Portuguese people from suffering both betrayals' and to integrate the Lusitanian state 'in the Spanish imperial order, helping it to escape from the powers that oppressed it'.¹³² For the JONS co-founder, this aim was so crucial as to justify the use of force. In an article emblematically entitled 'Do we conquer Portugal or does Portugal conquer us?', he abandoned any attempt at a benevolent tone, declaring: 'if Spain finds its eternal route, at the moment of regaining its territorial sovereignty, Portugal will be ours for a genuine and clean right of conquest'.¹³³

José Antonio Primo de Rivera himself favoured this territorial assimilation project. According to Felipe Ximénez de Sandoval, one of his most famous biographers, in a private conversation with some of his faithful comrades José Antonio supported Lisbon as the capital of the envisaged Spanish empire of the Falange. Through Lisbon, Primo de Rivera said, 'all Iberian impetus that summarise[ed] the Tagus River enter[ed] the Atlantic Ocean, and, from there, the Spaniards could see 'face to face the immense Hispanidad of [their] American blood'.¹³⁴ Beyond the rhetoric, the Falangist plans for the annexation of Portugal had to be a real concern for the President of the Lusitanian Council, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, who signed a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Franco's Spain in March 1939. Under this agreement, the contracting parties committed themselves to mutually respect their frontiers and not to endanger their respective territorial integrity in any way.¹³⁵ In doing so, Salazar established in writing good neighbourly relations with the new nationalist government of Madrid. At the same time, he bound the Caudillo to respect Portuguese independence and, implicitly, to contain the *camisas azules*' imperialist ambitions.

Claims to Gibraltar often accompanied the Blueshirts' pretensions over Portugal. Spain had ceded this strategic promontory at the entrance of the homonymous strait to England in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession. For the following two centuries, Spaniards repeatedly attempted to recover it but failed. The loss of Gibraltar, considered a 'neuralgic point of the life and grandeur' of the homeland by Falangists, was a matter of shame for national pride which the *camisas azules* were determined to erase.¹³⁶ 'Gibraltar [...] has been, is, and will remain the constant concern of the Falange', said Ximénez de Sandoval in 1937, confident that the world would see 'the victorious flags of Spain *Una, Grande y Libre*' flying once again in the fortress of

Peñon in the near future.¹³⁷ For National Syndicalist theorists, regaining that territory would mean a significant first step towards the reaffirmation of Spanish hegemonic role in the Mediterranean. Moreover, it would secure an important bridgehead to advance into North Africa, where Madrid had historical precedents and material interests.¹³⁸ According to party ideologues, from Gibraltar ‘the African call continue[d] to reverberate insistently in the ears of all Spaniards’ as the lands on the other side of the strait—where Spain left ‘many illusions and lots of blood’—represented the natural continuation of their homeland.¹³⁹

Morocco and Algeria were two geopolitical imperatives in the Falangists’ imperial project. The *camisas azules* alleged legitimate jurisdiction over them since, in their view, ‘the hunger and sweat of the Spaniards’ made possible the colonisation and the enrichment of both countries.¹⁴⁰ For the Blueshirts, ‘nobody [could] deny the Spanish influence while the Alhambra, the Mezquita and the Giralda stay[ed] upright’.¹⁴¹ Thus, they tried to persuade all Moroccans and Algerians to tenaciously reject the interference of France which they accused of occupying those lands illegitimately.

Spanish presence in Algeria, which mainly concerned the city of Algiers and the island of Peñon, effectively dated back to the early sixteenth century, long before French colonisation in 1830. The situation was very different in Morocco, where the two European powers had co-existed since 1912, when the Fez Treaty divided the country into protectorates. While Paris ruled an extensive region that corresponded to the majority of the state, Madrid administrated the area of the Rif and the western Atlantic coast, except for the international zone of Tangier. National Syndicalists complained about this division of Morocco, which in their view unjustly assigned to Spain only a small part of the territory, mostly mountainous and difficult to penetrate. It was a definite concern of the Falangists to ‘end this state of affairs for patriotic honour and interest’.¹⁴² Therefore, as ‘faithful realisers of the political will’ of the Catholic Kings, they promised to extend what they considered the natural Spanish rule over all of Morocco and committed themselves to oust the perennial French enemies from the country once and for all.¹⁴³

On this issue, the interests of the National Syndicalists coincided with the projects of Francisco Franco who had a special affection for Spanish Morocco, where he had spent much of his military career and where he started the Alzamiento in July 1936. The Caudillo was a fervent

proponent of vigorous expansionist politics in northern Africa, although he was aware that Spanish forces alone were not enough to achieve it. To this end, he sought the support of Hitler, whom he met on 23 October 1940 in Hendaye, a French town on the border with the Basque country, in the presence of their respective foreign ministers Serrano Súñer and von Ribbentrop. On that occasion, they discussed the entry of Spain into the Second World War. Franco made Spain's participation in the war conditional on the Führer's acceptance of his claims to French-controlled Morocco, part of Algeria and Cameroon, amongst others.¹⁴⁴ These claims were unacceptable to Hitler, who was unwilling to break the alliance with Vichy France, and prevented the conclusion of an official agreement between the two regimes.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, these negotiations are indicative of the importance that Franco attributed to the colonial issue in Africa, strengthening Falangist convictions of an imminent and imposing extension of the Spanish occupation in that continent.

If territorial expansion in the Maghreb represented a primary goal of the *camisas azules*' foreign politics, it was 'through the routes of the sea' beyond the Atlantic Ocean that they were sure to recover 'glory and prosperity' for their nation.¹⁴⁶ The foundation of the Hispano-American colony was the crowning achievement of Spanish imperialism and represented the bedrock of the 'undefined *destino en lo universal*' the Falangists wanted to return to fulfil.¹⁴⁷ For Ledesma Ramos, the 'firm and most vital people' who inhabited those lands were the 'perpetual manifestation of the [Spanish] imperial capacity'.¹⁴⁸ A visceral and indissoluble bond far beyond a simple linkage of brotherhood tied Spain to its former colonies. Thus, the founder of *La Conquista del Estado* stated: 'our role in America is not – nor is it equivalent to that of – a friendly people since we will always be obliged to be something more. We are them, and they will always be us.'¹⁴⁹ Ximénez de Sandoval echoed him a few years later, asserting that once the Spanish race was 'poured into twenty American people', it would have been 'absurd to ignore the force of blood'.¹⁵⁰

These statements, charged with affection and poetry, acted as a preamble to the far more concrete and less sentimental claims to overseas territories set out by National Syndicalists in the FE de las JONS programme of 1934. 'Regarding the countries of Latin America'—the third point in the last paragraph stated—'we will tend to the unification of culture, economic interests and power'.¹⁵¹ In this way, Spain would regain the 'title of pre-eminence in the universal endeavours' that it deserved, according to Falangists. Moreover, it would finally return to play its legitimate role of 'spiritual axis of the Hispanic world' that

North American imperialism stole from it in the nineteenth century.¹⁵² In the historical reconstruction of the Blueshirts' ideologues, the birth of the South American republics had taken place in the 'most chaotic of disorders'.¹⁵³ It ended up leading the newborn independent states—'defenceless and stuttering'—to the 'cold, inhuman domination [...] of the United States'.¹⁵⁴ Against it and Monroeism, Falangists proclaimed the motto '*hispano para los hispanos*' ('Hispanic world for the Hispanics'), inciting the Latin people to 'rebel against Yankee domination' and find salvation in the 'return to the Spanish [tradition] as the starting point of their civilisation and history'.¹⁵⁵

On 12 October 1892, the fourth centenary of the discovery of the New World, the conservative government led by Antonio Cánovas del Castillo proposed institutionalising the *Día de la Raza* (Day of the Race) to commemorate the ancient bond between Spain and the South American nations.¹⁵⁶ The initiative, which also involved Portugal, resulted from a wave of Hispano-American pride that followed the Spanish American wars of independence of 1810–25, and that the foundation of the Ibero-American Union in 1885 further strengthened. The annual 12 October ceremony, which officially became a national holiday under Antonio Maura's government in 1918, assumed new significance in the 1920s and 1930s, with the radicalisation of the Spanish right progressively transforming it in a 'patriotic rite at the service of power'.¹⁵⁷ This process began during Miguel Primo de Rivera's military dictatorship and reached its peak with the appearance of National Syndicalism, which gave the *Día de la Raza* a clear imperialist connotation. In celebrating Spain's colonial vocation, Falangists highlighted less its spiritual character and more its purely territorial and concrete nature. They reiterated the legitimacy of their presence in former overseas domains and their desire for future conquests.¹⁵⁸ Beyond the Atlantic Ocean was the natural extension of the Spanish nation and its living space that the *camisas azules* were determined to recover.

THE TRANSMISSION OF IMPERIAL VALUES

Both Fascist and Falangist theorists were aware of the importance of an efficient propaganda machine for securing the broadest possible consensus, and propaganda on colonial issues was certainly no exception. Thus, they designed and employed particular institutional tools in

an attempt to convince as many Italians and Spaniards as possible of the goodness of their majestic expansionist projects.

With this idea clearly in mind, Italian Fascism created the *Istituto Coloniale Fascista* (Fascist Colonial Institute or ICF), which was in charge of infusing a colonial conscience into citizens and encouraging joint scientific, commercial and industrial activities between the imperial possessions and the fatherland. The origins of the institute date back to January 1906, when a group of experts in colonial matters, on their way back from a congress in Asmara, founded it under the name of *Istituto Coloniale Italiano* (Italian Colonial Institute). Located in Piazza Venezia in Rome, its creation represented a reaction against the general defeatism towards Italian expansionism especially following the debacle of Adua, and laid the foundations for an active colonial revival.¹⁵⁹ Party ideologues carried on this heritage, and in February 1928 the PNF designated the ICF 'the great colonial school of the Nation' and the sole body responsible for coordinating imperial propaganda.¹⁶⁰

The institute performed numerous tasks. It assisted fellow compatriots abroad, published studies on the colonies, organised lessons on colonial culture, and hosted congresses and conferences. During the presidency of Pier Gaetano Venino, who was in office from 1928 to 1931, numerous peripheral sections appeared both within and outside the territory of the state, including the Youth Centres of Colonial Action, which provided the younger generations with an imperial education. Moreover, in that period, ICF activities multiplied. The Italian Colonial Chamber of Commerce was established in Milan. The Trade Fair of the Lombard capital hosted a permanent Pavilion of the Colonies. The creation of a Colonial Bank was under consideration. The promotion of rural cruises in Libya, prize trips for schoolchildren, the award of medals glorifying colonisation and celebrations of the *Giornata Coloniale* (Colonial Day) complete the picture.¹⁶¹

Information on these initiatives was widely disseminated thanks to the collaboration of the Fascist University Groups, which devoted a section of their magazine, *Libro e Moschetto*, to colonial themes. The ICF publicised all its activities mainly through its press organ, *L'Oltremare*, founded in 1927. It was a monthly publication that absorbed the old organ of the institute, *Rivista Coloniale*, and had the Deputy for the Colonies Roberto Cantalupo as its first director. Beginning in 1930, a committee led by Venino took the lead until it was suppressed in 1934, when *L'Oltremare* merged with *Rivista della Colonie Italiane* edited by the corresponding

ministry. Additionally, the volumes of the *Annuario delle Colonie Italiane*, monographs, postcards, commemorative stamps and colonial film programmes enriched the colonial propaganda that the daily information agency *Le Colonie* further implemented.¹⁶² In 1937, the institute changed its name to *Istituto Fascista per l'Africa Italiana* (Fascist Institute for Italian Africa) while continuing its 'action of fusion of all colonial forces of the Nation' until the end of the Second World War.¹⁶³ A new periodical, *Africa Italiana*, linked to it appeared in 1938.¹⁶⁴ Once the regime collapsed—and the empire with it—the institute was renovated. It stopped acting as the 'colonial arm of the party', in other words, a tool for political propaganda, and acquired a more scientific role.¹⁶⁵

In Spain, the National Syndicalist project to unite all Hispanic nations under the Falangist yoke and arrows could regard the activity of the *Consejo de la Hispanidad* (Council of Hispanicness or CdH) as contributing towards its ambitious aims. Set up on 2 November 1940, the CdH was responsible for spreading the imperial communitarian idea within the new Francoist state, as well as in the former colonial domains. Divided into five sections—cultural, political, economic, social and legal—the Council had the ultimate task of defining a uniform direction for relations with the ancient overseas possessions, and dissolving the various associations and pre-existing foreign circles that 'constantly falsif[ied] the old and sonorous Hispanic voice'.¹⁶⁶

Although the law that created the CdH did not explicitly mention the Falange, the text made obvious reference to the third point of the FE de las JONS programme of 1934. The first quote was in the preamble to the law that incited Spain to regain its status of 'spiritual axis of the Hispanic world as a title of pre-eminence in universal endeavours'.¹⁶⁷ The second article of the law referred to the FE de las JONS programme in so far as it indicated the primary goal of the CdH activities were the 'unification of culture, economic interests and power' with South America.¹⁶⁸ The presence of these elements left little doubt as to the political force in the regime that had pushed for the creation of this body. As the historian Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla stressed, the programme of the party ended up giving 'substance to a legal precept that, on paper at least, [would have inspired] the action of the Spanish state towards Latin America'.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, the fact that the legislator entrusted control of the CdH to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which the filo-fascist Ramón Serrano Súñer headed at the time, appears by no means accidental and is

indicative of how closely the imperialist narrative was linked to the more properly fascist component of the dictatorship.

The *camisas azules* greeted the creation of the Consejo de la Hispanidad enthusiastically. For them, it represented the ‘ambitious Spanish foreign policy in its best and most proper [form]’.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, they regarded it as the direct descendant of the ancient *Consejo de Indias* (Council of Indies), the highest administrative body of the imperial territories of South America and the Pacific, founded in 1524. Boasting such a predecessor, the Blueshirts tried to use the CdH as a tool to regain political leadership over the former colonies, at a time when Axis military successes were foreshadowing a fascist world victory and making Falangist imperial ambitions appear achievable.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, despite attempts to charm Latin countries and induce them to fight US influence, the activities of the CdH were not sufficiently well developed and the Council never gained popular favour.

Along with the Istituto Coloniale Fascista and the Consejo de la Hispanidad, Fascist and National Syndicalist ideologues could count on the *Fasci Italiani all'estero* (Italian Fasci Abroad) and the *Falange Exterior* (Falange Abroad) respectively to spread their imperial message worldwide. These were born as auxiliary party structures and played the role of revolutionary avant-garde of Fascism and Falangism outside the Italian and Spanish territorial boundaries. The first Fasci all'estero appeared spontaneously in several European cities before the March on Rome, although the party statute of 1921 did not mention them. Their official recognition dates from August 1922, when the PNF expressly set up a department for their management. During the Fifth Meeting on 16 February 1923, the Grand Council of Fascism divided this department into five sections corresponding to five geographic macro-areas: North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Europe. Giuseppe Bastianini directed them until November 1926, followed by Cornelio di Marzio and Piero Parini in 1928.¹⁷² Initially under the control of the PNF National Directory, the sections were placed under the supervision of the Foreign Ministry held by Mussolini himself ad interim several times.¹⁷³

The formation of the first nucleus of the Falange Exterior took place in summer 1935, also thanks to financial support from the Italian Fascist regime.¹⁷⁴ José Antonio Primo de Rivera founded it in Milan to gather Spanish students living in the Lombard capital who sympathised with National Syndicalism. Its creation was formalised in January 1936 and constituted the first nucleus of *Servicio Exterior* (Foreign Service or SE)

of the FE de las JONS, led by Ximénez de Sandoval until April 1937. José del Castaño Cadorna, his successor, directed the SE after its institutionalisation as *Delegación Nacional del Servicio Exterior de la FET de las JONS* (National Delegation of Foreign Service of the FET de las JONS or DNSEF), following the Unification Decree of 1937. Falanges Exteriores appeared in most of Europe, Central and Latin America, but also in Morocco, Canada, the Philippines, China and Japan. The DNSEF was restructured in August 1938, when it was divided into nine sections: the Foreign Female Organisations; Social Aid; Education and Youth Formation; Exchanges and Propaganda; Healthcare; Work; Treasury and Administration; Culture and Recreation; and Justice and Law.¹⁷⁵

Initially, both the Fasci all'estero and the Falange Exterior were in charge of managing economic aid from expatriate countrymen in support of the patriotic cause, which was promoted by the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts. However, the two structures quickly became tools of active political intervention to spread Fascist and Falangist doctrine across the world. Their main goals were to provide assistance to Italian and Spanish citizens abroad and to monopolise their political representation, fighting anti-Fascist and anti-Falangist propaganda in the countries that hosted them. They were also responsible for establishing relations with similar political movements and for exalting the national and imperial values of Italy and Spain on a global scale.¹⁷⁶ For Mussolini, the Fasci all'estero were a kind of 'Fascist consulates for the legal and extra-legal protection' of emigrant compatriots.¹⁷⁷ For Castaño Cardona, the Falanges Exteriores represented an 'effective instrument' of the Falangist 'external action in the spiritual, cultural and economic spheres', as well as 'the advance of [their] civilisation and a bulwark always ready to defend [their] movement'.¹⁷⁸

The Blackshirts and the Blueshirts tried to convert these organisations into bridgeheads for a more aggressive foreign policy that was capable of supporting their imperialist projects, but as time went by the results proved to be far below expectations. This was due, first, to the tepid support of expatriate compatriots and their modest participation in the activities of PNF and Falange foreign branches.¹⁷⁹ In the Spanish case, the difficulties also concerned the lack of means and the progressive loss of power by the most radical fascist component within Franco's government starting from 1941 to 1942. Nevertheless, the tensions (if not outright conflicts) between the two parties' hierarchies and the respective official state diplomacy—which did not tolerate political interference that could

discredit its work—represented the biggest obstacle to the realisation of Fascist and Falangist plans. The eternal state-party dualism reappeared, this time outside national boundaries, and once again it was the party that lost out in the struggle for supremacy.¹⁸⁰ In these circumstances, the Fasci all'estero and the Falange Exterior were gradually deprived of content and autonomy. When in the winter of 1941 the tide of the Second World War began to turn against the Axis powers, and the Allies started to contain the global advance of fascism decisively, these two structures substantially disappeared along with the imperialist ambitions of the parties that had created them.¹⁸¹

NOTES

1. Benito Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo* (Milano-Roma: Fratelli Treves, 1933), 22.
2. Raimundo Fernández Cuesta, 'Imperio,' *Vértice* IX (April 1938).
3. Ibidem.
4. José Gómez de Terán, 'L'individuo nella società fascista,' *Gerarchia* 6 (June 1937): 389.
5. Cf. Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'Prefazione,' in *Vecchio e nuovo nazionalismo*, eds. Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini (Milano: Studio Editoriale Lombardo, 1914), VIII–XII.
6. Ángel Ganivet, *Idearium Español y El porvenir de España* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1957), 31–32, 85–86, 114–115, 123–126 [I ed. 1896].
7. Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 194 [I ed. 1997]; Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007), 29 [I ed. 2002].
8. 'Le rivendicazioni nazionali,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 83 (24 March 1919): 1.
9. 'Il Fascismo e i problemi della politica estera italiana,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 34 (9 February 1921): 1.
10. 'Alle grandi assise del fascismo. Parla Mussolini,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 148 (24 June 1925): 1.
11. Giuseppe Bottai, *Mussolini costruttore d'impero* (Mantova: Edizioni Paladino, 1926), 8. See also Luigi Federzoni, 'Comunicazione al X Congresso Geografico Nazionale (Milano, 7 September 1927),' in *A.O. Il 'posto al sole'*, ed. Luigi Federzoni (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1938), 12.
12. Carlo Curcio, *La coscienza mediterranea dell'Italia negli scrittori del Risorgimento* (Roma: Edizioni di Sud, 1927), 29–30. Cf. Jean Louis Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1976), 16–17.

13. Giuseppe Mazzini, *Scritti editi ed inediti* (Imola: Galeati, 1941), vol. XCII, 167–168. Cf. Giovanni Belardelli, *Mazzini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010), 219–220; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 10–12; Paolo Benedetti, 'Mazzini in "camicia nera",' *Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa* XXII (2007): 205–206.
14. Carlo Curcio, 'Imperialismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, ed. Partito Nazionale Fascista (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1940), vol. II, 476; Curcio, *La coscienza mediterranea dell'Italia negli scrittori del Risorgimento*, 27–28. Cf. Vincenzo Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani* (Losanna: S. Bonamici e compagnia, 1846), vol. II–III, 50–55, 401–403; Cesare Balbo, *Delle speranze dell'Italia* (Parigi: Tipografia dei Fratelli Firmin Didot, 1844), 283–287.
15. 'Il programma fascista,' in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (Firenze: La Fenice, 1951–1963), vol. XVII, 219.
16. Bottai, *Mussolini costruttore d'impero*, 17. See Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 70–72; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 47–64.
17. Bottai, *Mussolini costruttore d'impero*, 19.
18. Ibidem, 20.
19. Not by chance, Luigi Federzoni was the first Minister of the Colonies of Fascist Italy from October 1922 to June 1924 and from November 1926 to December 1928. Similarly, Roberto Cantalupo was appointed Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1924, a role he held for two years. See Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 106–107, 112, 144, 243; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 134.
20. Enrico Corradini, *L'ombra della vita* (Napoli: Riccardo Riccardi, 1908), 290. On this topic see also Luigi Goglia and Fabio Grassi (eds.), *Il colonialismo italiano da Adua all'impero* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1981), 4–15.
21. Enrico Corradini, 'Le nuove dottrine nazionali e il rinnovamento spirituale. Discorso tenuto a Trieste l'11 dicembre 1913,' in *Enrico Corradini. Scritti e discorsi 1901–1914*, ed. Lucia Strappini (Torino: Einaudi, 1980), 235; Augusto Hermet, 'Realtà dell'impero,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1936): 447–450. On the historical reconstruction of Italian imperialism made by Fascism, see also Arrigo Solmi, 'Il programma dell'espansione nazionale,' *Gerarchia* 6 (June 1934): 448–452.
22. Carlo Curcio, 'Nazionalismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 244; Antonino Pagliaro, 'Fascismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. II, 150.
23. Antonino Pagliaro, 'Impero,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. II, 476.

24. Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Bari: Laterza, 2007), 143. On this topic see also Antonio La Penna, 'Il culto della romanità nel periodo fascista,' *Italia contemporanea* 217 (1999): 605–630; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 154–155.
25. Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, VII.
26. Ibidem, 48.
27. Ibidem, 206. On the topic see also Aristotle Kallis, *The third Rome 1922–43: The making of the Fascist capital* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating modernity: The Roman past in Fascist Italy* (London: Cornell University Press, 2012).
28. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, 6.
29. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 198.
30. Roberto Pavese, 'Internazionalismo e fascismo,' *Gerarchia* 9 (September 1938): 605.
31. Ibidem, 604. Cf. also Giuseppe Bianchini, 'Nazione e impero,' *Gerarchia* 11 (November 1934): 935–936.
32. Pavese, 'Internazionalismo e fascismo,' 604.
33. Curcio, 'Nazionalismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 242. See also Giuseppe Bastianini, *Quindici anni di politica estera fascista* (Roma: Tipografia della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, 1937), 3–26.
34. Pavese, 'Internazionalismo e fascismo,' 605.
35. Ibidem.
36. Pagliaro, 'Impero,' 483.
37. Ibidem. See also Amor Bavaj, 'Coscienza coloniale,' *Libro e Moschetto* 28 (9 May 1935): 6.
38. Pagliaro, 'Impero,' 484.
39. Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 139–140.
40. Luigi Federzoni, 'Discorso al Senato del Regno in sede di discussione del bilancio delle Colonie (4 April 1927),' in *A.O. Il 'posto al sole'*, 123.
41. Benito Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi* (Milano: Hoepli, 1939), vol. XII, 96–97. See also Alessandro Lessona, 'Le colonie italiane nel quadro europeo,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1932): 550–551. The chronicle of the landing is in 'I ventimila in Libia,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 41 (27 October 1938): 2; 'Fervore di vigilia nella XIX regione d'Italia,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 42 (3 November 1938): 1; 'I "ventimila" si avviano alla bonifica del "bastione dell'impero",' *L'Azione Coloniale* 42 (3 November 1938): 2; 'Con le colonie dei "ventimila" da occidente a oriente,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 43 (10 November 1938): 1. Cf. Roberta Pergher, *Mussolini's nation-empire: Sovereignty and settlements in Italy's borderlands 1922–1943* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 7–8; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 279, 322; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 137–139.

42. Solmi, *Il programma dell'espansione nazionale*, 448–452.
43. On population settlement as a central element of the Fascist vision of colonial rule, with a particular emphasis on Libya, see Pergher, *Mussolini's nation-empire: Sovereignty and settlements in Italy's borderlands 1922–1943*, 22–23, 49–54, 83–96; Eileen Ryan, *Religion as resistance: Negotiating authority in Italian Libya* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 154–155. Cf. Federico Cresti, *Non desiderare la terra d'altri. La colonizzazione italiana in Libia* (Roma: Carocci, 2011); Federico Cresti, *Oasi di Italianità. La Libia della colonizzazione agraria tra fascismo, guerra e indipendenza (1935–1956)* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1996); Claudio Segrè, *Fourth Shore: The Italian colonisation of Libya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).
44. Cf. Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), 152; Goglia and Grassi (eds.), *Il colonialismo italiano da Adua all'impero*, 13. See also Curcio, 'Imperialismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 475; 'Le rivendicazioni nazionali,' 1.
45. Nino Guglielmi, 'Roma, il fascismo e l'impero,' *Gerarchia* 9 (September 1935): 757; Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, 22.
46. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, 22.
47. G. J. 'Una nuova era per la Libia,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 12 (25 March 1937): 1; Attilio Terruzzi, 'Nella luce dell'impero,' *Gli Annali dell'Africa Italiana* 1 (May 1938): 3. Cf. Renzo De Felice, *Il Fascismo e l'Oriente. Arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), 180. See also Curcio, 'Imperialismo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 475.
48. Pagliaro, 'Impero,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 484. On the concept of empire as a legally and racially hierarchical organisation with an authoritarian form of rule see Pergher, *Mussolini's nation-empire: Sovereignty and settlements in Italy's borderlands 1922–1943*, 17–18; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in world history: Power and the politics of difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Charles Maier, 'Empire without end: Imperial achievements and ideologies,' *Foreign Affairs* 4 (2010): 153–159; Ann Laura Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty,' *Public Culture* 1 (2006): 125–146.
49. The main studies on the topic are: Angelo Del Boca, *I gas di Mussolini. Il fascismo e la guerra d'Etiopia* (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1996), 49–87, 89–103, 117–131, 145–162; Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Etiopia. L'ultima impresa del colonialismo* (Milano: Longanesi, 2010), 102–152.
50. In the second half of 1936, the PNF also created the Ethiopian Youth of Littorio while it established the Albanian Youth of Littorio in April 1939, which reported directly to the Albanian Fascist Party. They both had functions almost entirely similar to the homologue organisation in Libya. Cf. Manlio Barberito and Simone Malvagna, 'Partito Nazionale Fascista,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 385.

51. Italo Balbo, 'La politica sociale fascista verso gli arabi della Libia,' in *Atti dell'VIII Convegno Volta*, ed. Various Authors (Roma: Accademia d'Italia, 4–11 October 1938), 748. Cf. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991), 239–240.
52. M. D., 'La Gioventù Araba del Littorio a Roma per partecipare all'esultanza delle prime fulgide giornate imperiali,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 41 (22–23 May 1936): 1, 3.
53. Antonio Tovar, *El imperio de España* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1941), 24 [I ed. 1936].
54. The term *Hispanidad* is found, for the first time, in a treatise of spelling and accents in 1531. It appeared again in the fourth edition of the *Diccionario de la Academia* in 1803 as a synonym for *Hispanismo*, meaning a way of speaking that was characteristic of the Spanish language, and that did not follow standard grammatical rules. The term fell into disuse for decades. Miguel de Unamuno retrieved it in 1910 in an article titled *Sobre la Argentinidad* published in the newspaper *La nación* in Buenos Aires. Afterwards, several authors used the concept of Hispanidad, but it reached definite maturity only in the late 1920s. It was in 1927 that Unamuno wrote a new article in which he defined Hispanidad as a historical, spiritual and civic category that spread beyond the Atlantic Ocean and met with *Americanidad*. In Miguel de Unamuno, 'Hispanidad,' *Síntesis* 6 (November 1927): 305–310. After him, the monarchic intellectual Ramiro de Maeztu, influenced by the priest Zacarías de Vizcarra, provided an idea of Hispanidad that had not only a historical, linguistic, civic and geographical connotation but was also strictly bound to Catholicity. Ramiro de Maeztu, 'La Hispanidad,' *Acción Española* 1 (15 December 1931): 8–16.
55. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 24, 52–53. The reference to imperial Rome is a recurring element in Falangist ideology. Ernesto Giménez Caballero was the first to mention it in 1932, identifying the flag of fascism and the authentic 'genius of Spain' in the harmonic and creative *pax* of the ancient Roman Empire. Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Genio de España. Exaltaciones a una resurrección nacional. Y del mundo* (Barcelona: Ediciones Jerarquía, 1939), 184–189 [I ed. 1932].
56. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 67–75, 151–159. For a contemporary historical reconstruction of the decline of the Spanish empire see, among others, Joseph M. Delgado Ribas, 'Eclipse and collapse of the Spanish empire, 1650–1898,' in *Endless empire. Spain's retreat, Europe's eclipse, America's decline*, eds. Alfred W. McCoy, Josep M. Fradera, and Stephen Jacobson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 43–54; John Darwin, *The rise and fall of global empires, 1400–2000* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008); Matthew Restall, 'The decline and fall of the Spanish empire,' *William and Mary Quarterly* 1 (2007): 1–8; Juan

- Pan-Montojo (ed.), *Más se perdió en Cuba. España, 1898, y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998); John Elliot, 'The decline of Spain,' *Past and Present* 20 (1961): 52–75.
57. Manuel Ballesteros Gaibrois, 'El imperio de España,' *Jerarquía* 2 (October 1937), in *Jerarquía. La revista negra de la Falange 1936–1938*, ed. Various Authors (Madrid: Ediciones Barbarroja, 2011), 258.
 58. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 165–166. Cf. Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2015), 350–359.
 59. Pedro Sainz Rodríguez, 'Primer día del imperio,' *Vértice* 5 (September–October 1937).
 60. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 10. See also 'El Estado totalitario y nuestro sentido de la tradición de España,' in Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *Obras Completas* (Madrid-Barcelona: Fundación Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, 2004), vol. III, 455–456.
 61. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS' (November 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, ed. Agustín del Río Cisneros (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1976), 478.
 62. 'España y Cataluña' (30 November 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 515.
 63. Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 267; 'Sobre Cataluña' (4 January 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 240–241. Cf. also Marcela García Sebastiani and David Marcilhacy, 'America y la fiesta del 12 de Octubre,' in *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*, eds. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (Barcelona: Rba Libros, 2013), 382.
 64. '¿Euskadi libre?,' *FE* 1 (7 December 1933), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 229.
 65. 'La gaita y la lira,' *FE* 2 (11 January 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 249.
 66. Fernández Cuesta, *Imperio*. Cf. Gonzalo Alvarez Chillida, 'Ernesto Giménez Caballero: unidad nacional y política de masas en un intelectual fascista,' *Historia y política*, no. 24 (June–December 2010): 281–282.
 67. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 14.
 68. Ibidem. See also Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Rehabilitación del patriotismo,' in Onésimo Redondo Ortega, *El Estado Nacional* (Madrid: Ediciones F.E., 1939), 99; 'La España que hace,' *FE* 12 (26 April 1934): 3. On this topic cf. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 278; Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), 124.
 69. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 52–66.

70. Redondo Ortega, 'Ensayo sobre el nacionalismo,' 42–43; Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *¿Fascismo en España?* [I ed. 1935], in Ledesma Ramos, *Obras Completas*, vol. IV, 154–155.
71. Ernesto Giménez Caballero, 'Puntos de partida,' *El fascio* 1 (16 March 1933): 3.
72. José Antonio Primo de Rivera, 'Puntos iniciales,' *FE* 1 (7 December 1933) in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras Completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 225.
73. Ibidem.
74. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 220.
75. Pedro Laín Entralgo, 'La unidad de destino en José Antonio,' *FE* 1 (December 1937): 80. See also Pedro Laín Entralgo, 'Nueva unidad de España,' *Destino* 25 (21 August 1937): 2. Cf. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 173.
76. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 204–209.
77. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 60–61.
78. Antonio Tovar, 'Nación, Unidad e Imperio,' in *Cursos de orientaciones nacionales de la enseñanza primaria. Celebrado en Pamplona del 1 al 30 de Junio del 1938*, eds. Various Authors (Burgos: Hijos de Santiago Rodríguez, 1938), vol. II, 317. See also Antonio Tovar, 'Aspiramos a salir de nuestro retiro de siglos,' *Arriba* 217 (23 March 1941): 1.
79. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 123; Núñez Seixas, 'Nacionalismo español y franquismo: una visión general,' in *Culturas políticas del nacionalismo español. Del franquismo a la transición*, ed. Manuel Ortiz Heras (Madrid: La Catarata, 2009), 24.
80. 'Imperialismo,' *La Patria Libre* 2 (23 February 1935), in Ledesma Ramos, *Obras completas*, vol. IV, 396–397.
81. 'El imperio retórico,' *Arriba* 403 (16 July 1940): 1.
82. Ibidem.
83. Ibidem. Cf. Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 275.
84. Giuseppe Martini, 'Mediterraneo,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. III, 143.
85. Ibidem, 141–142.
86. Emilio Canevari, 'Difesa nazionale e difesa imperiale,' *Critica fascista* 22 (15 September 1936): 349; Luigi Federzoni, 'Il problema del Mediterraneo,' *Nuova Antologia* 1532 (16 January 1936): 129. See also 'Il grande discorso del Duce alla II Assemblea quinquennale del Regime. Gli obiettivi storici del Paese,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 67 (20 March 1934): 2.
87. Solmi, *Il programma dell'espansione nazionale*, 448.
88. Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 152–157; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 169.

89. Ibidem, 157–161.
90. On Giolitti's position on the entry of Italy into war against Libya and on the difficulties that the Italian troops encountered to consolidate their dominion in the Libyan territory see Nicola Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911–1931* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), 44–49, 121–128. Cf. also Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 108–122.
91. Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911–1931*, 128–133, 142; Giorgio Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano* (Torino: Loescher, 1974), 96–97.
92. About the use of gases in Libya see Del Boca, *I gas di Mussolini. Il fascismo e la guerra d'Etiopia*, 18; Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911–1931*, 154. About the deportations of the Libyan population during the Fascist re-conquest of Libya see Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911–1931*, 192–199; Gustavo Ottolenghi, *Gli italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa* (Milan: SugarCo, 1997); Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*, 174–232; Eric Salerno, *Genocidio in Libia. Le atrocità nascoste dell'avventura coloniale italiana (1911–1931)* (Milan: SugarCo, 1979). Cf. also Nicola Labanca (ed.), *Un nodo. Immagini e documenti sulla repressione coloniale italiana in Libia* (Roma: Piero Lacaita Editore, 2002). For a Libyan perspective, see Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *Forgotten voices: Power and agency in colonial and postcolonial Libya* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
93. Aldo Valori, 'Libia,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. II, 782–785. Cf. Labanca, *La guerra italiana per la Libia 1911–1931*, 170–173, 199–203; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 172–175; Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano*, 98–101.
94. Royal Decree-Law no. 2012 of 3 December 1934, regarding 'Ordinamento organico per l'amministrazione della Libia,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 299, 21 December 1934, 5786–5793. See also Michele La Torre, 'L'ordinamento delle colonie italiane dopo la fondazione dell'Impero,' *Gerarchia* 4 (April 1937): 251–259.
95. In the 1930s, Mussolini's government commissioned the geologist Ardito Desio to conduct the first studies on the Libyan subsoil that led to the identification of the presence of hydrocarbons in certain parts of the country. Nonetheless, the discovery of the largest oil deposits and the resulting extractive activity by American companies dates back to the second half of the 1950s. Cf. Dirk Vandewalle, *A history of modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 44. About Ardito Desio's studies on Libya see Giuseppe Stefanini and Ardito Desio (eds.), *Le colonie, Rodi e le altre isole italiane dell'Egeo* (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1928), 273–362.

96. 'La Libia è tornata romana,' *Libro e Moschetto* 1 (30 October 1938): 6. On this topic see also Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano*, 101–102; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 192–195.
97. From 1912 to 1924, the Italian Expeditionary Force in the eastern Mediterranean Sea occupied the Dodecanese islands. With the entry into force of the Second Treaty of Lausanne in August 1924, the international community recognised these islands definitively as territories subject to Italian sovereignty. From this time they were known as 'Italian Islands of the Aegean'. Cf. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 124, 145; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 202–203.
98. Renzo Sertoli Salis, *Le isole italiane dell'Egeo dall'occupazione alla sovranità* (Roma: Vittoriano, 1939), 334–335. Cf. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 178–183.
99. Sertoli Salis, *Le isole italiane dell'Egeo dall'occupazione alla sovranità*, 344.
100. Emilio De Bono, 'Le nostre colonie orientali,' in *L'Africa orientale italiana (Eritrea e Somalia)*, ed. Tommaso Sillani (Roma: La Rassegna Italiana, 1933), 4.
101. Cultivation was possible only on the tablelands in the hinterland of the country and to a modest extent, while mining activity was limited to salt extraction in areas neighbouring Massawa, Uachiro and Assab. Cf. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 174; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 197–199.
102. Ottone Gabelli, 'Le vicende della colonizzazione italiana in Eritrea e in Somalia,' in *L'Africa orientale italiana (Eritrea e Somalia)*, 104–112.
103. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 170–172; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 200–201.
104. Gennaro E. Pistolese, 'L'acquisto dell'Oltre Giuba,' in *L'Africa orientale italiana (Eritrea e Somalia)*, 98–99; Gabelli, 'Le vicende della colonizzazione italiana in Eritrea e in Somalia,' 112–118; Alessandro Lessona, 'L'Eritrea e la Somalia nei fini dell'espansione italiana,' in *L'Africa orientale italiana (Eritrea e Somalia)*, 119–127.
105. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 96–99. See also Arnaldo Cicchitti Suriani, *La concessione italiana di Tien Tsin (1901–1951)* (Roma: Attività editrice internazionale, 1950), 1–6.
106. Saverio Chelli, 'Volontà e coscienza d'impero' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1936): 714; Benito Mussolini, 'Politica di vita,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 244 (11 October 1935): 1. See also Giuseppe Bottai, 'Sul piano imperiale,' *Critica fascista* 21 (1 September 1936): 321–323.

107. Nicola Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero. Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia 1935–1936* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 243; Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano*, 137–138.
108. De Boca, *La guerra d'Etiopia. L'ultima impresa del colonialismo*, 64–101; Nicola Labanca, *In marcia verso Adua* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993), 360–393.
109. Giorgio Rochat, *Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d'Etiopia: studio e documenti 1932–1936* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1971), 26–33, 276–291; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 186–187.
110. Alessandro Lessona, *Verso l'impero* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1939), 73–81; 'L'incidente di Ualual,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 49 (20 December 1934): 1; G. M. Beltramini, 'Il problema dell'Etiopia,' *Libro e Moschetto* 65 (29 December 1934): 1. About the reconstruction of the Ual-Ual incident and the dynamics of the conflict in Ethiopia see Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa orientale. La conquista dell'impero* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1979), 245–291; Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Abissinia 1935–1941* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978), 21–182; Rochat, *Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d'Etiopia: studio e documenti 1932–1936*, 101–112; Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano*, 139–145; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 185–186; Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero. Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia 1935–36*, 22–23; Enzo Collotti (ed.), *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939* (Milano: La Nuova Italia, 2012), 255–261, 268–274; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 225–237, 244–255.
111. On the international opposition against the Italian campaign in Ethiopia, see Alessandro Lessona, *Verso l'impero*, 167–179; 'Le recise dichiarazioni del Duce sul problema etiopico,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 20 (16 May 1935): 1; 'Seduta straordinaria,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 35 (29 August 1935): 1; 'Libertà d'azione,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 36 (5 September 1935): 1; 'Contrattori imperiali,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 49 (5 December 1935): 1. Cf. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, 188–189; Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero. Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia 1935–36*, 25–27; Teodoro Sala, 'L'avventura coloniale e l'impero,' in Collotti, *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 261–268; Miège, *L'imperialismo coloniale italiano. Dal 1870 ai nostri giorni*, 237–244.
112. Giuseppe Bottai, 'Guerra fascista,' *Critica fascista* 2 (15 November 1935): 18.
113. Ibidem. See also Pietro Badoglio, *La guerra in Etiopia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1936), 217; Emilio Canevari, 'La guerra è finita,' *Critica fascista* 14 (15 May 1936): 209; 'Il Partito nella guerra etiopica,' *Libro e Moschetto* 17 (30 June 1938): 3.

114. 'Il duce annunzia all'Italia e al mondo che le truppe vittoriose sono entrate in Addis Abeba, che la guerra è finita e la pace ristabilita,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 127 (6 May 1936): 1; 'Come le armate del fronte somalo hanno frantumato gli ultimi centri della resistenza abissina,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 36 (5 May 1936): 1-2; 'La parola del Duce,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 37 (May 1936): 1. For a detailed report of the march on Addis Ababa see Badoglio, *La guerra in Etiopia*, 191-204. On this topic, cf. also De Boca, *La guerra d'Etiopia. L'ultima impresa del colonialismo*, 9-44; Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero. Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia 1935-1936*, 32-40.
115. 'La parola del Capo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 131 (10 May 1936): 1. Cf. Hermet, 'Realtà dell'impero,' 447-450; 'Legge romana,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 37bis (9-10 May 1936): 1; Renzo Sertolis Salis, *Imperi e colonizzazioni* (Milano: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1942), 324-333; 'Sostanza dell'impero,' *Critica fascista* 16 (15 June 1936): 241-242; Bottai, *Sul piano imperiale*, 322.
116. On the topic see Emilio Gentile, 'L'impero sui colli di Roma,' *Il Sole 24 ore* 160 (12 June 2016): 37.
117. Roberto Pavese, 'Statura dell'Impero,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1936): 455.
118. Pio Bondioli, *Albania. Quinta sponda d'Italia* (Milano: Cetim, 1939), 9-10; 'Quinta sponda,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 15 (13 April 1939): 1. Examples of the Fascist colonial claims in Gibuti and Suez are in 'Suez,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 1 (5 January 1939): 1; 'Il Duce precisa al mondo le rivendicazioni coloniali del popolo italiano,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 13 (30 March 1939): 1.
119. 'L'ordine del giorno approvato dal Supremo Consesso del Fascismo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 104 (14 April 1939): 1. Cf. Amedeo Giannini, *L'Albania dall'indipendenza all'unione con l'Italia (1913-1939)* (Milano: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1940), 187-189.
120. 'Resoconto stenografico della riunione di sabato 15 Aprile 1939 della Camera dei fasci e delle corporazioni,' in *Atti dell'Assemblea Plenaria. Discussioni della Camera dei Deputati, XXX Legislatura* (Roma: Tipografia Carlo Colombo, 1943), vol. I, 8.
121. Ibidem.
122. Gaspare Ambrosini, *L'Albania nella comunità imperiale di Roma* (Roma: Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista, 1940), 8.
123. Davide Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940-1943)* (Torino: Bollati Borghieri, 2003), 31-32.

124. Ideological affinities between the two movements undeniably dictated the support of the Falange for the colonial feats of Italian Fascism. Nonetheless, the fact that at the time the Under-Secretary of State for Press and Propaganda, Galeazzo Ciano, granted José Antonio Primo de Rivera a monthly subsidy of 50,000 lire through the Italian Embassy in Paris probably influenced the Falangist position. José del Val Carrasco, *Delirios de grandeza. La idea del Imperio en el fascismo español de preguerra, 1931–1936*, *Historia* 16, 164 (1989): 14. See also ‘El estado social de Abisinia,’ *Arriba* 21 (13 April 1935): 1.
125. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España* [I ed. 1935], ed. Pedro González Cuevas (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2003), 79.
126. José María Cordero Torres, ‘Un mes bajo el emblema del líctor romano,’ *JONS* 10 (May 1934).
127. Ibidem.
128. Ibidem. Cf. also Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, *¡Fuera el invasor! Nacionalismos y movilización bélica durante la guerra civil española* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 211; Núñez Seixas, ‘Nacionalismo español y franquismo: una visión general,’ 24.
129. Val Carrasco, *Delirios de grandeza. La idea del Imperio en el fascismo español de preguerra, 1931–1936*, 18.
130. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, ‘¡Hay que hacer la revolución!’ *La Conquista del Estado* 9 (9 May 1931): 1.
131. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, ‘España, sangre de imperio,’ *La Conquista del Estado* 12 (30 May 1931): 1.
132. Ibidem.
133. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, ‘¿Conquistamos Portugal o Portugal nos conquista?’ *La Conquista del Estado* 20 (3 October 1931): 1.
134. Felipe Ximénez de Sandoval, *José Antonio (Biografía apasionada)* (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, 1941), 457.
135. The text of the treaty of friendship and non-aggression between Spain and Portugal of 17 March 1939 is in José María Cordero Torres, *Relaciones exteriores de España (problema de la presencia española en el mundo)* (Madrid: Ediciones del Movimiento, 1954), 309–310.
136. Felipe Ximénez de Sandoval, ‘Esquema de una política exterior nacionalsindicalista,’ *FE* 4 (April 1937): 192; Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 79.
137. Ximénez de Sandoval, ‘Esquema de una política exterior nacionalsindicalista,’ 192.
138. ‘La patria libre,’ *La Patria Libre* 2 (23 February 1935), in Ledesma Ramos, *Obras Completas*, vol. IV, 394–396; ‘El mare nostrum,’ *Destino* 37 (13 November 1937): 2. Joaquín Costa spoke about the African mission of Spain already in the 1880s. In 1883, the regenerationist jurist

- and historian was among the founders of the *Sociedad de Africanistas y Colonistas* (Society of Africanists and Colonists) that was responsible for managing expeditions in western and equatorial Africa. On this topic, see José Antonio Rodríguez Esteban, 'Geografía y colonialismo en Joaquín Costa,' *Anales de la Fundación Joaquín Costa* 27 (2013): 222–224.
139. 'El destino africano de España,' *Pueblo* 704 (13 October 1942): 1; Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 79. Cf. Val Carrasco, *Delirios de grandeza. La idea del Imperio en el fascismo español de preguerra, 1931–1936*, 16.
 140. Ximénez de Sandoval, 'Esquema de una política exterior nacionalsindicalista,' 192.
 141. Ibidem. Cf. Val Carrasco, *Delirios de grandeza. La idea del Imperio en el fascismo español de preguerra, 1931–1936*, 16.
 142. Zafarín, 'Meditaciones sobre el Imperio,' *Destino* 20 (17 July 1937): 7.
 143. Zafarín, 'Meditaciones sobre el Imperio,' 7. Cf. Eugenio Nadal, 'Mar-ruecos,' *Destino* 255 (6 June 1942): 1, 3. On the Spanish claims in Morocco, see also the report of the meeting between Serrano Súñer and Galeazzo Ciano that took place in Naples in June 1939 in Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1990), 307.
 144. Gustau Nerín and Alfred Bosch, *El imperio que nunca existió. La aventura colonial discutida en Hendaya* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés Editores, 2001), 26–38, 66–72, 135–146; Val Carrasco, *Delirios de grandeza. La idea del Imperio en el fascismo español de preguerra, 1931–1936*, 18.
 145. Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Diplomacia franquista y política cultural hacia Iberoamérica 1939–1953* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 162–163. On the relations between Nazi Germany and Vichy France at that time see Robert Paxton, *Vichy 1940–1944. Il regime del disonore* (Milano: Net, 2002), 69–100. [Italian translation of the original *Vichy France: Old guard and new order, 1940–1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972)]; Robert Aron, *La Francia di Vichy 1940–1944* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1972), 224–276. [Italian translation of the original *Histoire de Vichy, 1940–1944* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1954)].
 146. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS,' 478.
 147. Cf. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Diplomacia franquista y política cultural hacia Iberoamérica 1939–1953*, 32–35.
 148. Ledesma Ramos, 'España, sangre de imperio,' 1.
 149. Ibidem.
 150. Ximénez de Sandoval, 'Esquema de una política exterior nacionalsindicalista,' 193.
 151. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS', 478. Cf. also Ledesma Ramos, *Discurso a las juventudes de España*, 79.

152. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS,' 478.
153. 'España y América,' *Destino* 137 (2 March 1940): 1.
154. Ibidem.
155. Miguel Gran, '27 glosas a los 27 puntos,' *FE* 2 (February 1937): 82; 'Misión americana de la juventud española,' *Destino* 116 (7 October 1939): 1. A general overview over the contrast between Hispanoamericanism and Pan-Americanism is in David Marcilhacy, *Raza hispana. Hispanoamericanismo e imaginario nacional en la España de la Restauración* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2010), 134–144.
156. The term *raza* had no discriminatory meaning. Nonetheless, in order to avoid misunderstandings, in January 1958 the name of the celebration was officially changed to *Día de la Hispanidad*. Law no. 18 of 7 October 1987 modified it again in *Fiesta Nacional* that Spain and the Americas, where it is also known as *Columbus Day*, celebrate still nowadays. See García Sebastiani and Marcilhacy, 'América y la fiesta del 12 de Octubre,' 383–395; Marcilhacy, *Raza hispana. Hispanoamericanismo e imaginario nacional en la España de la Restauración*, 575–583; Zira Box, *España año cero. La construcción simbólica del franquismo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2010), 242–244, 247. A detailed reconstruction of the origins of the Día de la Raza is in Marcilhacy, *Raza hispana. Hispanoamericanismo e imaginario nacional en la España de la Restauración*, 326–366. The text of Law no. 18 of 7 October 1987 is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 241, 8 October 1987, 30149.
157. García Sebastiani and Marcilhacy, 'América y la fiesta del 12 de Octubre,' 373.
158. Ibidem, 380–382; Box, *España año cero. La construcción simbólica del franquismo*, 242–255. See also David Marcilhacy, 'La hispanidad bajo el franquismo. El americanismo al servicio de un proyecto nacionalista,' in *Imaginario y representaciones de España durante el franquismo*, eds. Stéphane Michounneau and Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2014), 73–102.
159. See Giancarlo Monina, *Il consenso coloniale. Le Società geografiche e l'Istituto coloniale italiano (1896–1914)* (Roma: Carocci, 2002), 115–121, 143–157.
160. Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana (ed.), *L'Istituto Coloniale Fascista a trent'anni dalla sua costituzione* (Roma: Fratelli Palomba, 1936), 30; Antonino Pagliaro and Edoardo Scardamaglia, 'Cultura,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. I, 711.
161. The first Colonial Day took place on 21 April 1926, when Mussolini was on an official journey to Libya. In order to avoid overlapping

with the *Natale di Roma* (Birth of Rome) commemoration on the same day, from 1927 the Colonial Day celebrations took place on 24 May, coinciding with the anniversary of the Italian entry into the First World War and the spread of the Irredentist claims. The choice of that date was not fortuitous considering that, for the Blackshirts, Irredentism was the precursor of the imperial revival of the country. Overall, Colonial Day was celebrated only twice, in 1927 and 1928, respectively. From 1936 onwards, the Day of the Empire, set for 9 May, replaced this event. Cf. Pier Gaetano Venino, 'La relazione Venino su un anno di commissariato all'ICF,' *L'Oltremare* 1 (November 1929): 407; 'La giornata coloniale,' *L'Oltremare* 3 (January 1929): 33. On the activities of the ICF in general see, for instance, 'Attività dell'Istituto Coloniale Fascista,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 1 (3 January 1935): 4; 'Il conferimento d'una medaglia ai nostri pionieri italiani,' *L'Oltremare* 2 (February 1933): 91; 'Concorso coloniale e corso di nozioni coloniali,' *L'Oltremare* 6 (June 1933): 251; 'Viaggio in Cirenaica dei Giovani Fascisti dell'Urbe,' *L'Oltremare* 7 (July 1933): 301.

162. Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana (ed.), *L'Istituto Coloniale Fascista a trent'anni dalla sua costituzione*, 10, 30, 34–38. See also Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana (ed.), *Partito e impero* (Roma: Società anonima tipografica Castaldi, 1938), 5–19.
163. Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana (ed.), *L'Istituto Coloniale Fascista a trent'anni dalla sua costituzione*, 61.
164. For the complete list of all the publications of the Institute since its foundation, see Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana (ed.), *Bibliografia dell'Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana* (Roma: Società anonima tipografica Castaldi, 1939).
165. The quote is in Luigi Federzoni, 'La nuova vita dell'Istituto Fascista dell'Africa Italiana,' *Rivista delle Colonie* 1 (January 1939): 12.
166. 'El Consejo de la Hispanidad,' *Arriba* (3 November 1940): 1.
167. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS,' 478.
168. Ibidem. The text of the Law of 2 November 1940, in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 312, 7 November 1940, 7649.
169. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 269. See also María A. Escudero, *El Instituto de Cultura Hispánica* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1994), 41–106.
170. 'El Consejo de la Hispanidad,' 1.
171. Cf. Law of 2 November 1940, 7649; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 271, 284.
172. Partito Nazionale Fascista (ed.), *Il Gran Consiglio nei primi cinque anni dell'Era Fascista* (Roma: Libreria del Littorio, 1927), 14–15. Cf.

- Giuseppe Bastianini, 'I fasci italiani all'estero. Il valore di un Congresso,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1925): 633–639.
173. The Grand Council, during its XXVII session on 15 October 1923, established that the secretary and the vice-secretary of the Fasci all'estero were dependent on the National Directory of the PNF. Moreover, the secretary of the Fasci all'estero became an *ex officio* member of the Grand Council (to be then excluded from it in December 1928, as the result of the promulgation of Law no. 2693 regarding 'Ordinamento e attribuzioni del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo'). Nine years later, with the statutory amendment of November 1938, the secretary, the vice-secretary and the two inspectors of the Fasci all'estero joined the PNF National Council. The articles of the various party statutes, with relative modifications, concerning the *Fasci italiani all'estero* are in Mario Missori, *Gerarchie e Statuti del P.N.F. Gran Consiglio, Direttorio nazionale, Federazioni provinciali: quadri e biografie* (Roma: Bonacci, 1986), 353, 356–357, 363–366, 414–415; Partito Nazionale Fascista (ed.), *Il Gran Consiglio nei primi cinque anni dell'Era Fascista*, 88–89. Cf. Luca De Caprariis, 'Fascism for export? The rise and eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'estero,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (2000): 151–183; Emilio Gentile, 'La politica estera del partito fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei fasci italiani all'estero (1920–1930),' *Storia contemporanea* 6 (December 1995): 900–906. On this topic see also Emilio Franzina and Matteo Sanfilippo (eds.), *Il fascismo e gli emigrati* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2003); Nicola Labanca, 'Politica e amministrazione coloniali dal 1922 al 1934,' in *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 142–143; Domenico Fabiano, 'I fasci italiani all'estero,' in *Gli italiani fuori d'Italia*, ed. Bruno Bezza (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1983), 221–236; Enzo Santarelli, 'I fasci italiani all'estero (Note ed appunti),' *Studi urbinati di storia, filosofia e letteratura* 1–2 (1971): 1307–1328.
 174. Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 54–55.
 175. About the origins of the Servicio Exterior see Eduardo González Calleja, 'Fascismo para la exportación: la delegación nacional del servicio exterior de la Falange Española,' *Revista Horizontes Sociológicos* 3 (2014): 122–123; Eduardo González Calleja, 'El servicio exterior de Falange y la política exterior del primer franquismo: consideraciones previas para su investigación,' *Hispania* 186 (1994): 281; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 130–132. Cf. also Giuliana De Febo and Renato Moro (eds.), *Fascismo e franchismo. Relazioni, immagini,*

- rappresentazioni* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2005), 213–215; Stanley Payne, *The Franco regime 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 360–361. Specific examples of Falanges Exteriores are in Wayne H. Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the new order* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 67–69; Ricardo Pérez Montfort, *Hispanismo y Falange. Los sueños imperiales de la derecha española* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), 134–170; Florentino Rodao, ‘Spanish Falange in the Philippines, 1936–1945,’ *Philippine Studies* 1 (1995): 3–26; Francisco Veiga, ‘La guerra de les ambaixades: la Falange Exterior a Romania i l’Orient Mitjà, 1936–1944,’ *L’Avenç* 109 (1987): 10–18.
176. Gentile, ‘La política estera del partito fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei fasci italiani all’estero (1920–1930),’ 907–909, 913–914; Collotti, *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 140–141, 144–146; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 133–136, 145–146; González Calleja, ‘El servicio exterior de Falange y la política exterior del primer franquismo: consideraciones previas para su investigación,’ 282–292; González Calleja, ‘Fascismo para la exportación: la delegación nacional del servicio exterior de la Falange Española,’ 123–129.
 177. Benito Mussolini, ‘L’avvenimento,’ *Il Popolo d’Italia* 105 (3 May 1921): 1.
 178. José del Castaño Cadorna, ‘Universalidad de la Falange. Actividad y misión de la Falange Exterior,’ *Unidad* (1 December 1938), reproduced in Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 136.
 179. In the Italian case, there were fewer than 200 Fasci all’estero in 1925. About half of them were in Europe, 25 in the Americas, 20 in Africa (including colonies), thirteen in Asia and five in Australia. In 1928 the number increased exponentially, rising to around 580 units for a total of little more than 100,000 affiliates. Even if by the end of 1930, the sections of the Fasci all’estero were 623 with about 140,000 members, these figures are rather small, considering that Italian expatriates and residents in different parts of the world were about 10 million at the time. The data are in Collotti, *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 146. In the Spanish case, the most conspicuous part of the Falanges Exteriores was in Latin America, especially in Argentina. Nonetheless, there are no official data about the number of affiliates, except for the case of the Falange Exterior in the Far East. According to a study by Florentino Rodao, in the period between 1936 and 1945, the members in the Philippines were about 800, in China about 50, while the section in Japan had only two members. Florentino Rodao,

- ‘Falange Española en Extremo Oriente 1936–45,’ *Revista Española del Pacífico* 3 (1993): 85–112.
180. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 137–140; Gentile, ‘La política estera del partido fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei fasci italiani all’estero (1920–1930),’ 930–933; Collotti, *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 147–148.
181. González Calleja, ‘El servicio exterior de Falange y la política exterior del primer franquismo: consideraciones previas para su investigación,’ 299–307; Collotti, *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922–1939*, 151.



On Race and Nation: Certainties and Changing Definitions

THE ISSUE OF RACE

In the vision held by PNF and Falange ideologues, the totalitarian ideal of the national and imperial community automatically incorporated the ideal of ‘people’. In the great project of national rebirth and expansion present in all European fascist experiences between the two world wars, it was the people who, acquiring self-awareness, were entitled to carry out the historic mission of a general renewal of the fatherland. This renewal necessarily had to pass through a regeneration of the race, namely an authentic anthropological revolution aimed at creating a *homo novus* who was spiritually and physically strong, morally irreproachable and obedient to the party orders.¹ In light of these considerations, what meaning did the word ‘race’ assume for the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules*? Did it remain unaltered over time, or did it change coinciding with particular events? Moreover, what was the real importance of the racial element in building the national identity of Fascism and Falangism?

An examination of Spanish primary sources shows that National Syndicalist theorists always used the term ‘race’ as a synonym for the Hispanic community, without attributing any distinct biological value to it. As Saz stresses, in some way, the Blueshirts took the Castilian essence of Spain for granted.² Nonetheless, the awareness of the Spanish historical imperial plurality and the continuous Falangist call to the *unidad de destino en lo universal* prevented them from supporting or even theorising

discriminatory behaviours on a racial basis. Blood was never an element of identification of the nation for party ideologists, who constantly declared that they attributed more importance 'to the spiritual than the corporal, to the soul than the body'.³

In Antonio Tovar's historical reconstruction, an attempt to establish a racist state in the country took place at the time of the Visigoths' occupation, starting from the fifth century CE. The Goths, in 'their racist and Germanic commitment', tried to retain power by maintaining the purity of their blood from interbreeding 'without understanding that the secret of aristocracy that does not want to degenerate is only tension and vigour'.⁴ Ultimately, according to the Falangist theorist, the Visigoth monarchy was just the Germanics' struggle to preserve themselves, which resulted 'in a series of defeats' leading to the Arab invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. Against such a rigid way of understanding the state community, Tovar proposed a more comprehensive and dynamic interpretation. For him, Spain was proudly and undeniably a 'mix of races'.⁵ Its unity would have never been 'a racist unity, a linguistic or cultural unity, but a unity of destiny' in which the strength of the fatherland lay.⁶ Analogously, an article published in the Falangist Catalan weekly *Destino* in June 1938 claimed that the problem of the regeneration of race, which was considered typical of all national revolutions, concerned the spiritual sphere exclusively. 'We do not know what a Hispanic human body is', the author wrote, 'because it does not exist as an ideal type.'⁷ This peremptory statement preceded the following, more exhaustive explanation:

We who now populate Spain are descended from many races, among which numerous crossbreeds took place. There is no Hispanic type, physically or physiologically speaking. A good Spaniard can be brunette as well as blond, brachiocephalic as well as dolichocephalic, asthenic as well as pyknic. This does not mean that we have to stop cultivating the good qualities of the body, and we do not have to regenerate it. Nonetheless, this regeneration has to make the body perfect not as a goal but as an instrument since it is the tool to achieve the triumph of our Imperial and Hispanic soul, ideas, and culture.⁸

Although the article mentioned a generic physical regeneration of the people, this concept did not contain biological implications. What the Spanish fascists alluded to were simple interventions of positive eugenics. These included demographic policies to support childbirth, hygiene

measures and preventive social medicine, such as the childcare and maternity assistance which the Sección Femenina of the party supplied. Campaigns against sexually transmitted diseases, rickets and cretinism as well as specific measures to strengthen the body through sports activity, military education and manual work were also indispensable.⁹ No recourse to practices of negative eugenics was contemplated.¹⁰ For Falangist theorists, instruments like birth control, sterilisation and abortion constituted a negative and destructive action that would have fatally undermined the interests of the state and society.

The Catholic Church undoubtedly enjoyed some influence in defining this position. It categorically refused to endorse the use of tools that could damage the sacredness of the human being. Moreover, it strongly condemned every type of discrimination as contrary to the principle of the equality of all individuals in God's eyes. Bearing in mind these religious precepts, Giménez Caballero depicted Spain as the 'antiracist genius par excellence' which 'gave to the problems of race a solution of faith but never a solution of blood'.¹¹ The reference to the unifying role that Catholicism had played in the colonial conquests since the end of the fifteenth century was evident, allowing the apostle of Spanish fascism to corroborate the thesis about the absence of biological racism in the Hispanic tradition. In his opinion, the annual 12 October celebration represented proof. It was instituted by Spain 'precisely in the opposite direction to the Germanic sense'.¹² Ultimately, the Día de la Raza denied 'the pure race of Spain' and recognised 'as the basis of [its] genius the fusion of races and the Christian and compassionate sentiment of the communion of bread and wine, body and blood, under the symbol of a higher unity, of a more sublime and less somatic divinity'.¹³

Criticisms of Nazi doctrine concerning the purity of the Aryan race also came from Italian Fascist theorists. Until the first half of the 1930s, Mussolini and PNF ideologists did not hide their disagreement with Hitler's racist measures, which they considered scientifically unfounded. In an article published in *Il Popolo d'Italia* in August 1934 and emblematically titled 'Aryan fallacy', the Duce quoted the anthropologist Grafton Elliot Smith in so far as he believed that German theories contradicted the anthropological research. According to Mussolini, it was a 'severe lesson' for the Nazi *Kultur*.¹⁴ Science was unable to guarantee 'the "purity" of the blood of anyone' and, therefore, 'the new "civilisers" of the North could have some unknown relatives within the walls of Tel Aviv'.¹⁵ A few weeks later, the Duce reiterated this viewpoint, saying that 'a German race

[did] not exist' and that essentially Germany was 'made up of different races, more or less happily blended'.¹⁶ Moreover, he appeared sceptical about the realisation of a Nazi "herd" of pure blood.¹⁷ 'At best', he asserted, 'according to the experts' calculations, six centuries of racial marriages and racial castrations are needed.'¹⁸ Thus, he dismissed the topic quickly, declaring that there was 'plenty of time to talk about it, with calm and no rush', so as to demonstrate the scant bearing that the theme had on the Fascist political agenda.¹⁹

On the other hand, for a long time, the phenomenon of mixed-race people was not only an unquestionable reality but also, to some extent, desirable for the Blackshirts. As Mussolini declared, it accelerated the evolutionary process of the people since 'starting from happy mixes [there was] often strength and beauty for a nation'.²⁰ Besides, 'national pride [did] not need racial hysteria'.²¹ In the eyes of party theorists, the racial myth constituted the fulcrum of a 'barbarian idea of political civilisations' that was all centred on the 'power of biological, morphological and territorial elements'.²² For its part, Fascism was not interested in 'mechanical sterilisations' and 'utopias of more or less pure blood'.²³ On the contrary, it showed the path to authentic imperialism based on the 'physical power of the race'—interpreted as a 'propulsive and not static concept'—and the 'exaltation of an atmosphere of high ideal tension'.²⁴ The nation was, 'above all, a spiritual entity that overcame any grotesque question of dolichocephalic or brachiocephalic skulls, blond or brown hair', that is, 'a way of being, feeling and living collectively'.²⁵ Acknowledging this reality, the Fascist ideologists derided the 'presumption of forced and selected breeding of race with related sterilisations and eugenic mating' aimed at creating a caste of dominants.²⁶ In their opinion, no biological boundaries existed between individuals but only borders of spirit, civilisation, history and culture. These elements constituted the 'ethical essence of a people' and unequivocally determined its 'national personality, better and more than any mythical or doctrinal presumption of race and blood'.²⁷

This does not mean that, within the regime, there were not those who thought differently. Such was the case with a group of radical Fascist supporters who, inspired by the intransigent Fascism of Roberto Farinacci, were in favour of a harder approach to the issue of race. They gravitated towards the figure of the Sicilian journalist Telesio Interlandi, who embraced theses on biological racism and anti-Semitism enthusiastically even before Hitler's rise to power.²⁸ Mussolini had noticed Interlandi in 1924 when the latter openly expressed his support for

Fascism after the Matteotti crisis broke out. In the autumn of that same year, the Duce chose him to direct a new newspaper, *Il Tevere*, which was to serve as an ‘aggressive’ but ‘disciplined’ publication in that particularly difficult phase for the party.²⁹ From the pages of *Il Tevere*, Interlandi publicised racist and anti-Semitic theories, which, as Francesco Cassata stresses, constituted the core of his intellectual education and his “‘integral” vision of Fascism’.³⁰ However, his approach was minority within the regime. To see in it the ‘litmus test of Mussolini’s “secret thought”’ and the demonstration of the constant presence of a racist and anti-Semitic prejudice in the Fascist dictator’s convictions since the Twenties is controversial.³¹ Such an interpretation takes little account of Mussolini’s declarations and, above all, of his political choices, which do not offer evidence in support of such a thesis at least until the first half of the following decade. Moreover, the fact that there were no prominent regime intellectuals or theorists involved in the publications of *Il Tevere* suggests that Interlandi’s newspaper was the mouthpiece, albeit historically interesting, of a limited group of integralist Blackshirts.

De facto, although the term ‘race’ was used in the Fascist discourses and publications on several circumstances, it was mainly employed in its Lebonian meaning as a synonym for ‘people’ and ‘nation’ until the mid-Thirties.³² The initial part of Mussolini’s *Discorso dell’Ascensione* at the Italian Chamber of Deputies on 26 May 1927 constituted an enlightening example. On that occasion, the PNF leader declared it was necessary to ‘protect the destiny of the race and to cure the race’—meaning the national community ‘in its physical expression’—since ‘in a well-ordered state, the health care of the people [had] to come first’.³³ Continuing the speech, he clarified what the verb ‘to cure’ signified for him, mentioning a series of measures to fight illnesses. He condemned alcoholism, industrial urbanisation and singlehood, which he depicted as social plagues. Finally, he proposed to strengthen welfare programmes and to further implement legislation in order to increase the size of the population considerably.³⁴

As for Falangism, these were measures of positive eugenics that aspired to regenerate ‘the souls in light of the “moral revolution” the Great War realised and Fascism continued’ more than ‘the bodies in light of the science of heredity’.³⁵ Fascist eugenics was sceptical of the ‘cold determinism of genetics’ and the ‘mechanistic logic of reproduction control’.³⁶ To them, it preferred a quantitative and ‘populationist’ orientation that gave more importance to the increasing number of youth and its overflowing energy.³⁷ The party ideologists saw in demographic growth ‘the

reasons for greater power and a prosperous future'.³⁸ Therefore, on the one hand, with the reform of the Criminal Code in 1930, they severely condemned 'crimes against the integrity and health of ancestry' like instigation to suicide, abortion, anti-fertility propaganda, syphilis and gonorrhoea contagions.³⁹ On the other hand, they provided extensive instrumentation for its defence. Interventions to protect maternity and children, tax cuts for numerous families, and bonuses for marriage and childbirth were among the most significant tools. Taxation on single people, anti-urbanisation propaganda, development of physical education and improvement of hygiene both at home and in the workplace also got the green light.⁴⁰ Until the mid-1930s, these were the only measures to which PNF theorists referred when professing their intention of increasing the 'vitality of the nation' and the 'health of the race', also having the support of the Church that saw in Fascism and its demographic policy valid allies for the preservation of Catholic morals in a changing society.⁴¹

RACE, EMPIRE AND THE 'CONSTRUCTION' OF THE JEWISH PROBLEM

From the second half of the 1930s, racial theories began to spread consistently in Europe. Undoubtedly, the political climate that reigned in Italy and Spain at that time provided fertile ground for these theories to take root. Nonetheless, it happened in the two states in peculiar circumstances and different measures, posing questions on the discrepancies between the Fascist and Falangist approach to the theme of race, their motivations and the influence that the historical and cultural tradition of each country had on them.

In Italy, the Ethiopian war was the event that overturned the PNF attitude towards this issue and acted as the detonator of all Fascist racial anxiety. The problem concerned the spread of *madamato*, namely marital relations between 'metropolitan citizens' *pleno iure* and natives with whom the colonisers were in close contact during and after the military campaign.⁴² The consequent increase in the number of mixed-race children (*meticciato*) raised the matter of the 'defence of the unity and purity of the Italian race', which party theorists began to perceive as 'a condition of colonising superiority' and a good to be preserved at any cost.⁴³

Until 1935–36, these phenomena did not create any particular concern.⁴⁴ With Law no. 999 of 6 July 1933 containing the 'Organic system for Eritrea and Somalia', the Fascist government even looked

favourably upon awarding metropolitan citizenship to those born of mixed unions. Such normative provision recognised children born out of wedlock who were acknowledged by the Italian parent. Moreover, it was valid for those born of unknown parents ‘when the somatic characters and other evidence suggest[ed] that one of the parents belong[ed] to the white race’ and for those born of a colonial subject when it was plausible that the other parent was a white Italian citizen.⁴⁵ The fact that, at the time, the local population in Eritrea and Somalia was rather small—about 598,000 and 1027 million respectively—justified such a ‘benevolent’ attitude.⁴⁶ The *meticciato* was a limited phenomenon, and PNF ideologues tolerated it since it did not present a threat to their colonising plans.

The situation changed radically with the conquest of Ethiopia, in which about 15.6 million natives lived in 1936.⁴⁷ Fascist theorists perceived this massive entry of black people into imperial society and the exponential increase of unions between settlers and indigenous women as alarming. For them, the indiscriminate granting of citizenship to mixed-race Abyssinians would have constituted a dangerous *laissez-passer*. They were afraid that, in 50 years, there would have been ‘two or three million mulatto Italian citizens’ who, after occupying positions of power in Ethiopia, would have moved to the fatherland with the same intention.⁴⁸ According to General Emilio Canevari, by that time the destiny of Italy would have been the same as France, where naturalisations and mixed marriages ‘distorted race in its best national character, with the corollary of nigger deputies who punch[ed] white deputies at Bourbon Palace and a nigger undersecretary who legislate[d] on Colonies’.⁴⁹

This apocalyptic scenario presented by PNF ideologists spurred the government to intervene. The Royal Decree-Law no. 880 of April 1937 deemed *madamato* a crime and sentenced to between one and five years in prison Italian citizens who had a relation of concubinage with a subject of *Africa Orientale Italiana* (Italian Eastern Africa or AOI).⁵⁰ In the opinion of the anthropologist Lidio Cipriani, an expert on African demographic issues, this legislative measure was necessary. Those who had intimate contact with black people diminished their racial dignity and left the ‘permanent, painful and dangerous burden of bastards to posterity’.⁵¹ As a firm supporter of the ‘indissoluble link between racial nature and spiritual greatness’, Cipriani was convinced that any ‘mixture’ with inferior populations would have generated a ‘mediocre product’.⁵² For him, as for many other Fascist theorists, interracial cohabitation was an

evil to be avoided since it would have diluted the 'original intrinsic qualities' of the Italians and made them disappear in the 'dramatic gridlock of the half-castes'.⁵³ Even the famous song '*Faccetta nera*' ('Little black face'), which was very popular during the military campaign in Abyssinia, vanished from the mouths of the Blackshirts, coinciding with the adoption of the racial legislation.⁵⁴ According to various PNF exponents, it incited criminal promiscuity. It was unacceptable to think of blending 'blood with 3,000 years of culture and civilisation with blood that stagnate[d] in millennial barbarism' and, for this reason, it was censored.⁵⁵

In order to specifically prevent 'ethnic Babylonies', on 29 June 1939 the regime promulgated Law no. 1004 which contained 'penal sanctions for the defence of racial prestige in front of Italian Africa natives'.⁵⁶ It punished acts that degraded the colonisers' moral role, whether the person committing them was a native or a citizen abusing his position of member of the Italian race or failing the duties that his race involved. Besides reiterating the condemnation of *madamato*, the law prosecuted Italians who habitually frequented places reserved for natives, appeared drunk in front of natives and worked for natives. It also established severe penalties for crimes committed by metropolitan citizens in complicity with and to the detriment of the local population, introducing into the penal code the new crime of 'abuse of native credulity'.⁵⁷ Less than a year later, Law no. 822 of 13 May 1940 containing 'rules on half-castes' prohibited any assimilation definitively. Children born of an Italian father and an indigenous mother had *de iure* the status of the native parent, who was responsible for their subsistence and education. Once deprived of the right of citizenship, they could not be acknowledged or adopted by any Italians and were forced to live in a state of physical segregation, far from 'the nationals'.⁵⁸

In light of the above, as Mussolini himself stressed, the racial problem 'did not break out suddenly' but emerged 'in relation to the conquest of the empire' and, specifically, to the appearance of practical problems linked to the colonial administration.⁵⁹ As the Duce declared, 'empires are conquered with weapons, but they are held with prestige'.⁶⁰ For this reason, according to the Fascist interpretation, 'a clear, severe racial conscience' was needed to 'establish not only differences but also evident superiorities'.⁶¹ Party ideologues once again returned to the myth of Rome. In their opinion, at that point of the Fascist historical experience, it was necessary to distinctly individuate the 'permanent characters' of the Italian people, which were rooted in the mythical past of imperial

Rome.⁶² Thus, the Blackshirts referred to Romanity as a 'vital continuation of a very particular mentality and unmistakable physical and psychic virtues', which testified to a 'unity of race' that was 'complete, homogeneous and always identifiable in the long journey of the centuries'.⁶³ The 'typical and decisive values of the race' allowed the nation to reach the imperial dimension, which required the defence of the 'psychological factors' and 'universal biological laws' that made the African conquests possible and transformed Italy into a colonising power.⁶⁴ In this way, race in its biological meaning became a fundamental component for the definition of the national identity, firmly establishing on the ethnic level the 'unity achieved in the moral and political order'.⁶⁵ Ultimately, as an editorial in *Critica fascista* claimed, race represented 'the new frontier of the fatherland'.⁶⁶ Without it, the empire would not have arisen 'as a vital expression of the Nation' and would not have 'evolve[d] or maintain[ed] itself as an organic and civil unity'.⁶⁷

To justify this new orientation, the Blackshirts tried to trace a line of continuity between the legislation on mixed-race children in Italian Eastern Africa and the demographic measures that Fascism had adopted since the early 1920s. PNF theorists aimed to show the existence of a racial tradition in the party ideology from its origin and, in so doing, mitigated the radical nature of that change. With this idea in mind, they presented the new position on race as a logical consequence of the acceleration of the Fascist totalitarian project, which was partially true. In that turning point in the state life 'from its purely and territorially national phase, already completed in all its elements, to the imperial phase that mobilise[d] all its energies', the racial conscience would have expressed 'totalitarianly' the human ideal type of Fascism.⁶⁸ Through the party, the regime boasted of having reformed Italians morally and politically according to the Mussolinian vision.⁶⁹ Fascist racism represented the last stage in the process of rebirth of the nation, to which the *camicie nere* eventually decided to attribute also a biological uniformity.⁷⁰

PNF ideologues reused those arguments repeatedly in 1938 to justify the anti-Semitic turn of the regime. According to them, a *fil rouge* united the presumed racial tradition within the party and the laws against the Jews, passing through the measures against mixed-race people. Fascism had awakened a racial conscience in Italy, and it was inevitable that it would transfer 'the problem from the colonial to the national field'.⁷¹ Ultimately, as the Grand Council stressed, the Jewish question was nothing but the 'metropolitan aspect' of the complex and thorny

issue of race, which the Blackshirts addressed with focused and incisive interventions.⁷²

The alleged faults of the Jews were manifold. Charged with unbridled individualism, they were accused of paying attention only to their own racial interests and being unwilling to integrate themselves into the body of the nation.⁷³ In the opinion of the committed anti-Semite Paolo Orano, they had a proclivity for differentiation and auto-isolationism. It seemed to him that they 'always needed to live in a ghetto' and that, even if the 'material one was wide open', they needed to create a 'moral one'.⁷⁴ To support this thesis, Orano took the list of Jewish fighters, dead, wounded and decorated men that the Jewish community had published after the First World War as confirmation of their 'spiritual need to distinguish themselves'.⁷⁵ For him, the fact that they documented their merit separately reflected their detachment from the nation, which they perceived not as a moral duty but an obligation. Their immoderate vanity did the rest, making them believe themselves to be 'more worthy of praise and gratitude than all the others'.⁷⁶

Another accusation concerned the supposed hostility of Jews to Fascism. Their loyalty to the regime was questioned to the point that Jewish circles were directly associated with organised anti-Fascism. Jews' participation in the Zionist 'extranational endeavour' further aggravated their position in the eyes of party intellectuals. Zionism was an 'outrage' to the 'sacrosanct, exclusive duty to live, think, fight and sacrifice oneself for the development of imperial Fascist Italy', according to the Blackshirts, who considered it impossible to serve the Jewish nationalist cause and the PNF with equal loyalty at one and the same time.⁷⁷ Moreover, the historical proximity of Zionism to 'perfidious Albion' and the approximately 7000 Jews who fought in the International Brigades alongside the republicans in the Spanish Civil War were irrefutable proof for the *camicie nere* of a Jewish international anti-fascist stance.⁷⁸ Branded with the black mark of 'subversives', Jews were also blamed for disturbing the equilibrium of the Arab world, to which the Fascist state was bound tightly after the conquest of the empire.⁷⁹ The accusation of conspiracy with freemasonry and Marxism, based on the thesis contained in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that the fervent pro-Nazi Giovanni Preziosi undertook to spread in Italy, completed the defamatory picture.⁸⁰

Slandered in such a way, the Jews were 'involved in the clash between the "nation and the anti-nation"'.⁸¹ Fascists labelled them true enemies

of the fatherland and, for this reason, they removed them from the institutional and social life of the state. No scruple of conscience came even from the regime's youth, which counted among its members the fiercest supporters of the anti-Semitic turn. Those who had grown up entirely according to Mussolinian precepts abandoned any human compassion to embrace the propaganda against the 'anti-national Jew' with unscrupulous harshness. Thus, in the midst of the Second World War, a member of the Fascist University Groups wrote: 'every Italian should feel the disdain for [the Jewish] race as a completion of the love for the homeland, or better still, as a whole with it'.⁸² No excuse or justification for these enemies of the country was contemplated. 'The inner front also ha[d] its battle' and it had to be 'war to the Jews, again and again, and to all those who defend[ed] them'.⁸³ Similarly, in 1942 the student Carlo Pignoldi described the war that was being fought in Europe at the time as 'a Jewish war' that Fascism 'need[ed] to win'.⁸⁴ Without hesitation, he asked for 'even more severe' action against these adversaries, who had to be 'expelled from the national organism permanently'.⁸⁵

On these ideological premises, in autumn 1938 the regime promulgated anti-Semitic laws that established the concept of race on a biological foundation in juridical terms.⁸⁶ For party theorists, the laws represented the 'totalitarian and energetic reaffirmation of the national community' in the racial field and a bulwark in the 'defence of the Aryans against the virus injected into [Italian] blood' by the Jews.⁸⁷ This normative transformed the ideas contained in the *Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti* (Racist Scientists' Manifesto), published the previous July, into binding legal dispositions. One hundred and eighty supposed experts signed it, although there were no outstanding academic personalities among them, the signatories being mostly university researchers. The Manifesto, whose principal author was Mussolini himself according to the testimonies of Galeazzo Ciano and Giuseppe Bottai, sought to demonstrate the existence of an uncontaminated and homogeneous Italian race.⁸⁸ What it referred to was not a generic 'historical-linguistic concept of people and nation'.⁸⁹ On the contrary, it imposed a much more physical idea of race based on 'the relation of pure blood that link[ed] modern Italians to the generations which had populated Italy for centuries'.⁹⁰

Immediately, these theories received an enthusiastic welcome within the group of Telesio Interlandi, who had intensified his campaign of racial and anti-Semitic hatred over the years through *Il Tevere* and two new magazines, *Quadrivio* and *La Difesa della Razza*, which he directed

from August 1933 and August 1938 respectively.⁹¹ Not by chance, many within Interlandi's entourage had been involved in drafting the Manifesto, which was welcomed as the outcome of a 'scientifically sound and young Italian school' in opposition to antiquated academic theses that justified racial hybrids.⁹² Some Catholic circles were also among the admirers of the 1938 legislation. Especially within the Jesuit order, anti-Semitic prejudices were always circulating and had their *raison d'être* in conspiracy theories, the stereotyped image of the 'carnal Jew' and the ancient accusation that charged the Israelites with deicide.⁹³

Despite these keen accessions, biological racism and anti-Semitism, which had not been part of the Italian tradition until then, were of scant interest to the people.⁹⁴ Moreover, they penetrated the PNF ideology in a limited way as the discriminatory clauses of the Royal Decree-Law no. 1728 seem to confirm, suggesting a mainly political motivation behind the persecution system. The reference is specifically to Article 14, which partially excluded from punitive measures the mutilated, disabled, wounded and volunteers in the Libyan War, First World War, Ethiopian War, Spanish Civil War and those involved in the Fascist cause. It also spared the legionnaires of Fiume and the Blackshirts who had joined the Fascist movement before the March on Rome, and the exemption also covered the families of the individuals concerned.

In this way, Article 14 skated over blood issues and racial hybrids to 'reward' Jews who had served the nation and the party with honour, connecting the persecution primarily to a political prejudice rather than a biological one. What mattered most was the devotion of the Jew to the Fascist cause, which the *camicie nere* made coincide with the national cause by extension. If the 'Jew/anti-Fascist' binomial and consequently also the 'Jew/anti-nation' binomial broke, the reasons for the persecution also became weaker, reducing the biological matrix of Italian anti-Semitism to an opportunistic expedient. No wonder that some extremist members of the GUF did not approve this form of exoneration, to which they referred as the 'Trojan horse of discrimination'.⁹⁵ For them, it meant absurd naturalisation that would have earned Jews 'the gratitude of the nation' to the detriment of 'the laws of soul and blood'.⁹⁶ Furthermore, it constituted a severe threat to the security of the state since it would have allowed the Jews to 'be Italian, Fascist and Aryan' at one and the same time.⁹⁷

The reality was that a Jewish problem in Italy never existed. The Jews who had settled in the country had always constituted a small community which in 1938 numbered about 47,000 individuals living mainly in the northern central part of the peninsula and were well integrated into the social fabric of the nation.⁹⁸ They had also demonstrated in many situations a firm attachment to the homeland, as their participation alongside other Italian fighters in the First World War and in D'Annunzio's campaign in Fiume proved, making the charge of anti-nationalism against them unfounded.⁹⁹ Even the theory of Jews' supposed hostility towards the regime was not convincing. Many showed their devotion to Fascism from the beginning. They made donations to the party and occupied prominent roles in parliament, in the army, in the universities and in the judicial and administrative sectors.¹⁰⁰ This was the case with Guido Jung who was the Minister of Finance from July 1932 to January 1935 and member de jure of the Grand Council throughout his mandate. Similarly, Renzo Ravenna performed his function as *podestà* of Ferrara, a city so dear to early Fascism, from December 1926 to March 1938.¹⁰¹

Many Jews continued to regard themselves as Fascists even after the promulgation of anti-Semitic laws. Following autumn 1938, Mussolini received several letters from Jews professing unconditional respect and gratitude towards him. Among them was the anonymous J.B., who wrote:

My religion is Fascism, and my Messiah is Mussolini. [...] Duce, on behalf of all young Jewish Italian citizens born and raised during Fascism, I want to tell you that nothing in the world can ever extinguish this Italian flame of volunteering. Today more than ever, it shines purely in our hearts, in contrast to the general panic that invaded the Jewish world under the demolition hammer of the anti-Semitic campaign.¹⁰²

Between September 1939 and June 1940, Jews of all ages and social class addressed the Duce to reiterate the concept. Driven by a strong sense of moral and civic duty, they asked for permission to fight for the nation and the regime. Just two days before Italy entered the Second World War, for instance, P.S. wrote that he wanted to contribute with his sacrifice to the imperial destiny of the nation. He said that his blood and the blood of his children 'burned of Italianness', and they felt 'deeply humiliated for not being able to respond freely to the common [military] appeal' due to the restrictions imposed by the anti-Semitic legislation.¹⁰³ Thus, he declared they were ready to give their existence for their country and invoked the

Duce to let them ‘embrace the rifle as volunteers of the Blackshirts’.¹⁰⁴ On 10 June 1940, the young M.E. also launched his appeal to Mussolini:

Race or no race, I just feel I am Italian and Fascist. I want to contribute with all my strengths [...] to the greatness of my beloved country. Educated as Fascists, we have welcomed with discipline and sympathetically those provisions that, even if they hit us in the most profound and holy of feelings, we accepted without question and considered correct because they come from you. [...] Today I ask you to let me serve [...] the fatherland [...] in whatever way you command. With you in life and death.¹⁰⁵

Over 400 heartrending missives were written by Jews promising to be worthy of shedding their blood for the glory of Italy and the Duce. They leave little doubt about the loyalty of many Jews to Fascism, making the accusation of betrayal against them even more absurd. Nor is the additional allegation of adherence to international Zionism credible. It was scant until 1938 and increased only moderately after the promulgation of anti-Semitic legislation.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the thesis concerning the existence of a Jewish lobby conspiring in the economic and financial fields was baseless, as the Italian Semitic population was employed mainly in administration, politics and academia.¹⁰⁷ Not least, the fact that Mussolini himself had not shown particular prejudices against Jews until the mid-1930s suggests that even he did not perceive them as a real threat initially. Their participation in the internal political debates of the party and some personal relations of the Duce—such as his affair with the writer and art critic Margherita Sarfatti—are indications of this.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the Blackshirts’ leader had shown no signs of preconceived hostility towards them even in October 1920, when he said:

Italy does not know anti-Semitism, and we believe it will never know it [...] In Italy there is no difference between Jews and non-Jews in all fields, from religion to politics, from the army to the economy. In the government, we even had three Jews at one time. Italian Jews have their new Zion here, in our adorable country that many of them defended heroically with their blood.¹⁰⁹

PNF politics and the official doctrine of the regime reflected Mussolini’s thought inasmuch as they did not have an ‘anti-Semitic vocation’ until the mid-1930s.¹¹⁰ The words of Nahum Goldmann, an eminent member of the Zionist movement as well as the founder and president of the World

Jewish Congress, confirmed it. During the third World Conference of the Jewish Delegations held in Geneva in August 1934, he stated that the coexistence of totalitarianism and Judaism was possible. In his opinion, the case of Mussolini's Fascism was emblematic since, until then, Italy had 'maintained equality of rights for Jews', who therefore felt safe inside the peninsula.¹¹¹ The results of recent research by Nicola D'Elia, who re-read the Fascist anti-Semitic turn through a comparison with the French case, corroborate Goldmann's statements. In his analysis, D'Elia stresses that large sectors of the Jewish population in France regarded Mussolini's regime as friendly towards their Italian coreligionists until the mid-1930s. Up to that moment, the moderate and conservative French Jewish press reported Fascist acts of goodwill towards Jews and Jewish presence within the PNF as proof of the compatibility between Fascism and Jewishness, to the point of considering the Duce's dictatorship a 'bulwark against anti-Semitism'.¹¹²

During the early 1930s, several events seemed to support such interpretations. In 1930, the government promulgated Royal Decree no. 1731, which recognised the Jewish communities together with their religious and educational function, even though it placed them under the control of the Ministry of Justice and Worship Affairs.¹¹³ In the months following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Mussolini gave German Jews fleeing the first Nazi persecutions refuge in Italy. Intellectual dignity was also recognised for Jews who joined the cultural life of the nation actively and at a high level. For instance, the authors of the entries 'anti-Semitism' and 'Jews' in the Italian Encyclopaedia were Jews, and there were some Jews among the participants in the prestigious conference of the Accademia d'Italia in October 1932.¹¹⁴

These considerations certainly do not diminish the impact that the anti-Semitic turn of Fascism had on the whole national community, nor do they cancel this shameful page in Italian history. As Vivarelli emphasises, state anti-Semitism was not 'simple discrimination' but 'real persecution' that reached unprecedented levels of violence and cruelty under the German occupation during the years of the Italian Civil War.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, when investigating the reasons for this tragic drift, it is misleading to trace them to intrinsic anti-Semitic components within the party ideology dating back to its origins. Such an ideological development occurred several years after the birth of the movement and the founding of the regime and, significantly, in correlation with specific political events. On the one hand, anti-Semitism was functional in re-launching the Fascist

totalitarian project during a period of stasis for the dictatorship following the Ethiopian war.¹¹⁶ Like racism, it constituted the final step towards the creation of the New Man of Mussolini, who was determined to complete his plans for the anthropological reform of the Italian people.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, anti-Semitism represented a tool to satisfy practical needs and strategic decisions, especially in the area of foreign policy. Thus, as Fascism embraced racism when dealing with the problem of mixed-race people in the empire, it analogously embraced anti-Semitism when it chose to link the fate of Italy to Nazi Germany.¹¹⁸

Although Hitler's racial measures inevitably influenced Italian anti-Semitic legislation, there were no constraints originating from Germany in this development. The anti-Jewish laws of 1938 were the result of a deliberate choice by the Duce and his ideologues and determined to a large extent by political calculation.¹¹⁹ Indeed, if Fascism had reached an unprecedented level of consensus within the nation after the conquest of Ethiopia, it experienced a different situation in the international arena. The 'return of the empire to the fatal hills of Rome' meant political isolation for Italy. At that time, Mussolini could count only on Hitler, who gave him *carte blanche* in eastern Africa in exchange for Fascist approval of his project of racial supremacy. Taking advantage of the instability in the Old Continent, the Führer launched an aggressive expansionist policy to unify all people of German language and blood in Middle Europe. From January 1935 to October 1938, he achieved formidable successes that gave concrete expression to the Nazi dream of a great Germany. He took possession of the Saar again and militarily reoccupied the Rhineland. He annexed Austria and invaded the Czechoslovakian region of the Sudetenland. In only three years, Germany succeeded in becoming the dominant power in Europe without encountering any particular resistance, as the apathy of the liberal democracies facilitated the Führer and his imperialist plans.

In this context, Mussolini decided to formalise the alliance with National Socialism. Galeazzo Ciano, head of the Foreign Ministry from June 1936, strongly supported this partnership as he was sure it would guarantee a radiant and prosperous future for Italy.¹²⁰ However, the German imposition of the *Anschluss* began to clarify power relations between the two countries. The annexation of Austria on 11 March 1938 caught Mussolini off guard. Not only had he hoped that it would never happen, but he was not even aware of his ally's plan until after it was accomplished. The Duce had no choice but to accept it willingly.

Addressing the Chamber of Deputies on 16 March, he declared that such an event had “‘tested” the Axis’, which was ‘not an efficient diplomatic building just for normal occasions, but it proved to be especially strong in [that] exceptional moment’.¹²¹ From that time on, Italy and Germany—‘united as they [were] by a similar concept of life’—would ‘march together’ to give to the ‘troubled [European] continent a new balance’, finally making the ‘peaceful and fruitful collaboration among all peoples’ possible.¹²²

During his visit to Italy in May 1938, the Führer proposed to Mussolini a military alliance—either open or secret—as the crowning achievement of the special bond uniting the Italians and the Germans. This was to be a relationship based on ‘equal interests’ and the ‘commonality of ideologies’ that would lead to a profitable cooperation between ‘these two races of such great virtues and value’.¹²³ In response, the Duce made no formal commitment. He merely evoked the notions of ‘ideal community’, the ‘ethical law of friendship’, generically mentioning the need for ‘justice, security and peace’ in a ‘regime of international coexistence’.¹²⁴ Mussolini’s hesitation was due to several reasons. First, he was still troubled by the unexpected annexation of Austria. Moreover, he did not want to compromise Italy’s relations with England irreparably, nor to undermine a possible rapprochement with France. Certainly, it was not what Hitler expected. Nonetheless, that trip had the side-effect of triggering the reaction of the international press, which began to question the solidity of the Axis. The situation forced Mussolini to expose his position since he could not allow the Axis to be discredited. Even worse, he did not want Italian lack of goodwill towards Germany to appear to be the cause of the Axis’s fragility, inasmuch as it would have raised unacceptable doubts about his leadership in global public opinion.¹²⁵

The evident hostility towards National Socialism in Catholic circles definitely did not play in favour of the head of the Blackshirts. Pope Pius XI showed his opposition with the publication of the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* in March 1937. He reiterated it when Hitler arrived in Rome, retiring to Castelgandolfo in protest. For his part, King Vittorio Emanuele III did not hold the Führer in high regard, and among the Fascist elite many were perplexed about Mussolini’s strategy of closer ties with the Germans. Openly pro-Nazi leaders were few. Most hierarchs were convinced that the only reason for proximity to Germany should be to restore relations with other powers or to escape the isolation in which Italy found itself after the Ethiopian campaign and its participation in the

Spanish Civil War. Others took advantage of the alleged or real connections with the high representatives of National Socialism to facilitate their careers.¹²⁶ Mussolini could not tolerate the situation, refusing to admit that anyone disapproved of his choices or dared to oppose them. Therefore, he ordered the PNF to attack the Church, the monarchy and what was, for him, the lazy and decadent bourgeois mentality that he perceived as an obstacle to his plans for the Italian anthropological revolution, and of which at that time Jews were often considered representative.¹²⁷ The aim was to silence any dissent and persuade the people of the 'historical necessity' of the Axis.¹²⁸ For the Duce, the 'confluence of the Fascist Revolution and the National Socialist Revolution' had become inevitable at that point in Italian–German relations; and so it was also for the anti-Semitic turn.¹²⁹

It was a key change in the history of the regime. Fascism and National Socialism had never been this close. The direct and indirect effects of Hitler's visit culminated in Mussolini abandoning his hesitation and embracing total alignment with his German ally. Consequently, on 18 September 1938 the Duce, who had hitherto maintained an ambiguous position on the relationship between the Fascist state and Jews, called world Hebraism an 'irreducible enemy' of the Blackshirts and announced a policy of separation within the country.¹³⁰ Jews were accused of betraying their nation and were persecuted by a party and a regime that in many cases they had enthusiastically supported.¹³¹ Reasons of state prevailed over any previous belief and good sense. At that point, Mussolini's priority was to cement Italy's relationship with Germany, which the Pact of Steel strengthened militarily in May 1939.

In the eyes of the Fascist leaders, the consequences of that criminal decision needed to appear to be of little importance. Sacrificing Jews on the altar of reasons of state was the price to be paid for consolidating the bond between Fascist Italy and the Third Reich politically and ideologically. As the Duce wrote to his sister Edvige in September 1938 with unspeakable unscrupulousness and opportunism, the existence of racism and anti-Semitism in Italy was 'so important in its political appearance as it lack[ed] weight in its real substance'.¹³² No deep conviction had pushed him in that direction; if circumstances had led him to 'a Rome-Moscow axis rather than to a Rome-Berlin axis' he would have 'fed the Italian workers [...] with the equivalent tall story of the Stakhanovite ethics and the happiness it subsume[d]'.¹³³ Even those who, like Giuseppe Bottai,

opposed the alliance with Germany and did not have any particular resentment towards Jews pledged to enforce anti-Semitic laws, justifying them in light of 'high reasons of foreign policy'.¹³⁴ For Bottai, the Jewish problem in Italy existed 'in small proportions' and could be solved 'with small administrative acts', whereas the government was 'shoot[ing] with a cannon to kill a bird'.¹³⁵ Nonetheless, in the Fascist regime, 'leader's directives ha[d] to be accepted' since rejecting them needed 'reasons of irresistible moral resistance', and Bottai's reservations on the 'method of the anti-Semitic fight' were not enough.¹³⁶

The reflections of these key figures of the regime further confirm the doubts raised above about the intrinsic nature of racism and anti-Semitism in Italian Fascism. Certainly, the distinctly undemocratic character of Fascist ideology constituted a fertile ground for the emergence of discriminatory behaviours. The same can be said for Fascist ultra-nationalism, which led the Blackshirts to idealise the Italian nation as a world-leading superpower, employing as a reference model the mythical Roman Empire which had demonstrated its cultural and military superiority and civilising ability across the globe for centuries. However, this does not mean, as Roger Griffin points out, that the fascist phenomenon is 'inherently biologically or genetically racist' or 'necessarily obsessed with "blood-lines," racial purity or heredity'.¹³⁷ At the same time, the fact that racism and anti-Semitism appeared at a certain point in the historical parabola of Italian Fascism does not amount to the same as tracing their roots to the birth of the movement and party itself, as they were inborn elements of the Fascist phenomenon from the beginning. As has been observed, until the mid-1930s there were no significant elements to anticipate such a turn. The only references to race were in ordinary measures of demographic politics that were aimed largely at increasing the population and preventing disease. The tragic story of Italian racism started with legal regulation against *madamato* and continued with legislation against Jews, between which, however, it is difficult to find an 'absolutely indissociable logical and conceptual connection', as Enzo Collotti affirms.¹³⁸

If it is controversial to determine the intrinsic nature of racism and anti-Semitism in Italian Fascism, it is even more problematic to accept *in toto* that these two elements constitute common denominators of the fascist phenomenon in general, as Angelo Ventura claims instead.¹³⁹ Although they were present in most countries that experienced a fascist phase between the world wars, these sentiments arose for different reasons and manifested themselves in different ways and with different

intensities. The risk is to lump very diverse situations together and, in so doing, to ignore the peculiarities of the individual national cases. In this regard, if both Italian and German anti-Semitism are equally execrable from a moral point of view, a distinction exists between them based on the degree of violence and the methods they employed.¹⁴⁰ In Germany, the persecution was carried out systematically, bringing about the tragic outcomes that have gone down in history. In Italy, neither anti-Jewish legislation nor colonial regulation was consistently implemented; both remained confusing at various points, which affected their application.¹⁴¹ Moreover, considering racism and anti-Semitism as innate and permanent attributes of every fascism can be misleading for another reason. It can lead to false conclusions by depriving other movements or parties, such as Falangism in Spain, of their authentic fascist character simply because they experienced racism and anti-Semitism in a very marginal way.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the word *raza* frequently appeared in the literature and speeches of the National Syndicalist leaders but in a generic sense, as a synonym for the Hispanic community. The reason for this approach to the issue of race lies in the founding principles of the movement itself. The concept of *unidad de destino en lo universal* so dear to the *camisas azules* made it pointless to differentiate between individuals on biological criteria. It meant the union of all peoples of Spanish language and culture who had once formed the great multi-ethnic empire of the Catholic Kings, in which religion rather than purity of blood served a unifying function. In Spanish imperialism, distinctions on a physical basis did not take root, and an approach of assimilation towards the natives largely prevailed over segregationist policy. Obviously, there were prejudices relating to the cultural and civilising superiority of the conquerors compared with the indigenous peoples subjected to colonial rule. Nevertheless, discourses on the integrity of race were of little interest to Spanish colonisers. As a consequence, Falangist leaders, who looked to that mythical empire as a source of inspiration, also found it pointless to debate phenotypic differences and the illicitness of ethnic mixes. Thus, for instance, Antonio Tovar rhetorically asked himself ‘what value could the concept of “purity of race” have for the Spaniards given that they historically ‘counted all races within the Hispanic world’.¹⁴² His consideration was emblematic, mirroring the prevailing view throughout the entire Falangist camp which ultimately did not conceive race in its biological significance as a central element defining the national identity.

A similar situation occurred with anti-Semitism, of which there had been hardly a trace in Spanish society from the end of the fifteenth century. The problem of coexistence with the Jewish community that had resided in the Spanish peninsular territory since Roman times—known as the Sephardim—was resolutely faced in March 1492 at the end of the process of Christian *Reconquista*. Under the Edict of Granada, Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon forced them to convert to Catholicism. Moreover, the monarchs expelled from their reigns and dominions those who refused to observe the order, with death and confiscation of property the penalty for non-departure or unwanted return.¹⁴³ After that radical intervention, which is estimated to have caused an exodus of about 100,000 Jews, over the centuries and especially following the abolition of the Holy Inquisition in 1834, the Jewish question died away.¹⁴⁴ As Tovar wrote, ‘for the Spanish sensitivity, in which race is not everything’, the Semitic problem lost its ‘virulence’ and was not ‘something fatal’ or ‘a problem of blood’.¹⁴⁵ In his interpretation, the Jews had constituted a threat in so far as they represented ‘a radically distinct, anti-European, anti-national, anti-Christian religion and culture’.¹⁴⁶ Once they abandoned their creed, it was only ‘a matter of generation and time’ before they were perfectly ‘assimilated and blended’.¹⁴⁷

This was exactly what happened. In the early twentieth century, there were about 20,000 Jews out of a population of seventeen million. They lived mainly in the cities of Seville, Madrid and Barcelona, and were perfectly integrated into the national social fabric.¹⁴⁸ The new century began amid a climate of general detente towards them. In 1910, the Senator of the Kingdom Ángel Pulido founded the Hispano-Jewish Union under the patronage of King Alfonso XIII to promote reconciliation with the Sephardic communities scattered across Europe and North Africa.¹⁴⁹ On 20 December 1924, a Royal Decree facilitated their naturalisation within six years. It specifically granted citizenship to individuals of Spanish origin living abroad and their descendants who had not been able to acquire it before for reasons beyond their control.¹⁵⁰ Article 27 of the new republican constitution of 1931 further improved the position of Jews in the country. It conceded full freedom of worship to followers of all religious beliefs and allowed them to profess their creed openly. In addition, the 29 April 1931 Decree promoted by Minister of Justice Fernando de los Ríos encouraged the acquisition of Spanish citizenship by Jews in the Moroccan protectorate as well as their inclusion in the social life of the state. Several public declarations by illustrious exponents

of the republican political class complete the picture of the support of Spanish institutions for the Sephardic cause.¹⁵¹

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that when José Antonio Primo de Rivera founded the Spanish Falange in October 1933, the party had no anti-Semitic character. Like the co-creator of the JONS Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, José Antonio attributed scant importance to the issue, merely referring to it when praising the National Socialist regime or when mentioning the 'Jew' Karl Marx.¹⁵² No allusion to anti-Semitism was present even in the FE de las JONS programmatic points of 1934. Indeed, Spanish fascism could count on several intellectuals who wished to enhance cultural ties with the Sephardic world, which they considered a constituent element of the Hispanidad. Among them, such a prominent figure as Ernesto Giménez Caballero was actively involved in the diffusion of Sephardic culture through missions abroad, conferences, books and documentaries including '*Los judíos de patria española*' ('Jews of the Spanish fatherland'), which he personally shot in 1931.¹⁵³ Ultimately, even though racist theories from Germany were circulating in Europe at the time, there was no particular anti-Jewish bias in the Spanish fascist community. Significantly, an article that appeared in the journal *FE* in January 1934 stated:

Regarding 'anti-Semitism,' the German fascio distinguishes and separates itself from the Italian fascio and all the others in embryo as, for example, our Spanish fascio. [...] Something similar to Spain happens to Italy. There, the Jews are tolerated since the time of Titus. The Pope admitted the Tiber ghetto, secularly, at the very feet of the Vatican. Italy, as well as Spain, does not have a 'racist question' even if there are some false, weak and fastidious trends about a 'presumed Latin race.' This is what happens in Spain with our paradoxical 'Celebration of the Race,' which means the opposite actually: namely, that Spain is mixed with all races without any racist and unitary intention, without any prejudice.¹⁵⁴

In the opinion of the National Syndicalists, the Jewish problem for Spain was not and would never have been 'a problem of race'.¹⁵⁵ On the contrary, it was 'an issue of faith', confirming that the dividing line may have been constituted of the religious factor rather than an ethnic-biological component.¹⁵⁶ It is no coincidence that the only fringe of Falangism in which anti-Semitic theories took root was the sector closed to clerical circles, the foremost exponent of which was the Jonsist Onésimo Redondo Ortega. As an integralist Catholic and admirer of

Germany—where he had lived from 1927 to 1928 working as a Spanish-language teaching assistant at the University of Mannheim—Redondo Ortega made anti-Semitism one of the leitmotifs of his political propaganda. Since the creation in 1931 of his first political association, the *Juntas Castellanas de Actuación Hispánica* (Castillian Juntas of Hispanic Actualisation), he had embraced the charges of deicide and usury against Jews as well as the conspiracy theories linking them to freemasonry and communism. Thus, he blamed them for plotting to overturn the traditional order of the state, causing the collapse of the Spanish monarchy and paving the way for the birth of the Second Republic.¹⁵⁷

Redondo Ortega was editor of the first Spanish edition of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which, however, as in Fascist Italy, were not very successful in Falangism. He also wrote a series of articles on anti-Semitic themes in his journals *Libertad* and *Igualdad*, beginning with an article published on 22 February 1932, in which he declared his desire to unmask the ‘Jewish plan, conceived and [...] developed by international capital in alliance with secret societies and international revolutionaries’.¹⁵⁸ He called *The Protocols* ‘a priceless proof’ of the Spanish situation ‘as it [was]’, namely ‘an invasion of foreign plans to humiliate and impoverish the country with the easy collaboration of [national] intellectuals and politicians as docile tools of the lodges’.¹⁵⁹ Labelling Jews with the black mark of authentic ‘enemies of the Hispanic society’, the Jonsist leader accused them of disturbing the equilibrium of the state with their ‘campaign of extreme political hatred’.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, he condemned them of destroying the *pax Christiana* that had ruled the country for centuries and for facilitating the ‘clandestine sale and barter of Spain to foreign speculators’ with their shady financial practices and through the control of the world press.¹⁶¹

With the outbreak of the Civil War, these anti-Semitic theories slowly began to manifest themselves within the FE de las JONS. The support of the national and international Jewish community for the Republic against Franco affected the diffusion of such biases. The growing influence of German propaganda within the Caudillo’s front as a result of Hitler’s technical-military aid to the nationalist cause acted in the same direction. In its wake, some Falangist publications, together with parts of the Catholic press, appeared favourable towards the Nazis’ first punitive measure against Jews, reacting similarly to the news of the promulgation of the Italian legislation in autumn 1938.¹⁶² Nevertheless, even in these cases, anti-Semitism continued to be a marginal element in Falangist

discourses both during the Spanish Civil War and after the outbreak of the Second World War.

It was an 'anti-Semitism without Jews', as Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida describes it.¹⁶³ Excluding the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the areas of the Moroccan protectorate, there were few Jews in the metropolitan area and the population at large were not prejudiced against them. Moreover, and similarly to what occurred in Italian Fascism, some Blueshirts, together with other sectors of the anti-liberal Spanish right, targeted Jews for political reasons rather than because of their culture, religious beliefs or ancestry. Unlike the Blackshirts, however, this did not also entail an ideological change within Falangist political culture, where anti-Semitic statements maintained a circumscribed diffusion and always remained on a superficial plane.

In reviving ancient rumours about the existence of a coalition between Judaism, Marxism and freemasonry to subvert the world order, the National Syndicalists essentially blamed Jews for sustaining the Popular Front. The Falangists' main aim was not to push the masses to a 'Sephardim hunt'. On the contrary, it was a strategic choice. By attacking the Jews, they intended to strike at the entire republican alliance, which the Jews supported militarily against the nationalist front. In the eyes of the *camisas azules*, it was the most anti-Spanish coalition that had ever existed. Socialists, communists, freemasons, republicans, anarchists and supporters of peripheral nationalism had all armed themselves to defeat the 'real' Spain of Franco and the Falange. The Blueshirts also added Jews to this list of adversaries of the fatherland involved in the clash between the two Spains, throwing them unscrupulously and indiscriminately into the large cauldron of anti-national enemies.¹⁶⁴

Unlike Mussolini's dictatorship, the Francoist regime never implemented state persecution against Jews. Not only did they form a very narrow and well-integrated community, but the Caudillo himself had also never shown any open hostility towards them. Franco had always enjoyed good relations with the members of the conspicuous Jewish colony of about 14,000 people in the northern territories of the Moroccan protectorate, where he spent the most significant years of his military career. Moreover, he owed a debt of gratitude towards them for supporting the Spanish army in crucial circumstances. They played an important mediating role between Spanish occupying forces and the local population after the Rif War of 1921–26. Not least, they provided considerable financial aid to the Alzamiento in July 1936. This does not mean that, coinciding

with the rapprochement with the Axis, the Generalísimo did not opportunistically launch himself into declarations against Judaism as an enemy of Spain. However, these invectives always came in connection with more insistent and frequent accusations against freemasonry and communism, to which Judaism was systematically linked.¹⁶⁵

De facto, Franco's victory in April 1939 had repercussions for the Sephardim, resulting in the cancellation of several rights and liberties they had enjoyed up to that time. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Jews were deprived of their freedom of worship. It was abolished in favour of the reappearance of the Catholic confessional state, which automatically implied the prohibition of Jewish liturgical rites and education in the entire national territory. The new Francoist state also denied international protection to Jews from foreign countries, preventing them from settling in Spain to escape the persecutions that were taking place in areas under the control of the Third Reich. Besides, the Jewish community was subjected to special vigilance by the regime security services. In January 1938, with the formation of Franco's first government, a 'Department of Judaism' was established within the Ministry of Public Order, which the Ministry of the Interior incorporated in December of the same year. Under the supervision of Serrano Súñer, Minister of the Interior at the time, this department was in charge of controlling Jews' activities and, crucially, was included together with the 'Freemasonry Department' in the 'anti-Marxism section'.¹⁶⁶

However, upon closer examination, these measures do nothing but confirm a lack of specific persecutory intent against Jews, who were persecuted by the nationalists not for being members of a particular racial community but rather for being part of the enemy coalition. In fact, the abolition of freedom of worship did not impact Judaism exclusively, since the legislative provisions concerned all religious creeds other than Catholicism. As for the denial of international protection for Jews in the Spanish territories, it did not also mean the prohibition of transit, although this was only possible in small groups on presentation of very detailed documentation and on a contingent basis. This does not absolve Franco of his faults or qualify him as a defender of the Jewish population: washing his hands of the problem as a matter of convenience was humanly regrettable, to say the least. Nonetheless, the fact that between 20,000 and 35,000 Jews found salvation by reaching Spain cannot be ignored; some were then allowed to travel to other intercontinental destinations, while others succeeded in saving themselves by entering the country illegally

through the Pyrenees. Finally, the special vigilance that the regime exercised over the Sephardim did not imply arbitrary detentions. The only Jews to be imprisoned were those who had fought on the republican front against the Generalísimo's deployment and were punished for their presumed anti-nationality.¹⁶⁷

Ultimately, political pragmatism made it difficult for Falangists to criticise anti-Semitic theories openly. The victory of nationalist Spain in the Civil War essentially depended on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, which at the time were, in different terms and to different degrees, active promoters of anti-Semitism. Moreover, the successes of the Axis in Spain and later on in the first years of the Second World War seemed to predict the victory of fascism at the European level and the establishment of a new continental order in which the *camisas azules* strongly wanted to participate. Nonetheless, despite the historical and political context, Spanish fascism, as well as the Francoist coalition in general, adopted a cautious attitude towards anti-Semitism. Nazi theses about the alleged biological inferiority of Jews were never attractive to National Syndicalists. Similarly, the fear of a presumed imminent danger coming from Jews did not arouse great concern among the Blueshirts, except to a limited extent and for propaganda purposes and political convenience.

The testimonies of some Falangists joining the *División Azul* (Blue Division), the Spanish volunteer corps who went to fight in Russia alongside the Wehrmacht in June 1941, exemplify this aspect.¹⁶⁸ These individuals greatly admired Nazi Germany to the point of spontaneously offering themselves as a military support force on the Eastern Front. However, they did not remain indifferent to the human tragedy of the Jewish prisoners they met along the way and whom, in some cases, they helped to escape persecution. In his war diary, Dionisio Ridruejo, who was among the most distinguished members of the *División Azul*, described one of those encounters as follows:

I have seen a group of Jews passing by. They were marked, dejected, with a dead look in their eyes. I do not know where they came from or where they were going, while I feel great compassion since one thing is to figure out the theory and another thing is to figure out the facts. I understand the anti-Semitic reaction of the German state. It is understandable in light of the history of the last twenty years. It is understandable, even more deeply, in light of the whole history. German anger is nothing but an episode. This has happened before and will inevitably happen in the future in one way

or another. This persistence of the Jewish people and this cyclical return to the destruction of the temple [...] is one of the most fascinating problems in history. [...] However, if this—and the particular Nazi reasons—can be understood, it is no longer understandable when we are face to face with the human fact concretely. These Jews, who are brought to Poland or expelled from it, suffer, work, and die probably. If it can be understood, it cannot be accepted. In front of these poor, trembling human beings, any theory falls down. For us—not only for me—it surprises, scandalises and offends in our sensitivity this ability to develop a cold, methodical, impersonal cruelty [...]. It seems to us that the sudden and passionate raid at blood and fire, as well as the brutal, instantaneous, explosive liquidation and the settling of scores are more explicable, more acceptable. [...] On the contrary, between us, these columns of Jews raise storms of commiseration even if we do not have any sort of fondness towards them. On the whole, Jews disgust us. Nonetheless, we cannot help but be sympathetic to men. I only have vague information about the methods of persecution, but, from what we see, it is excessive. [...] No state, no idea, no dream of the future as nobles, fortunate or beautiful as it can be—and I believe in German dreams—can have this power of indifference towards the delicate and immense business of lives without seriously prejudicing itself.¹⁶⁹

NOTES

1. Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007), 242–254 [I ed. 1997].
2. Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003), 254. Cf. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2002), 370–371.
3. Dr. Azul, 'Ensayo sobre la raza,' *Destino* 67 (11 June 1938): 6. See Saz Campos, *España contra España. Los nacionalismos franquistas*, 248.
4. Antonio Tovar, *El imperio de España* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1941), 27 [I ed. 1936].
5. Ibidem, 26.
6. Ibidem, 17.
7. Dr. Azul, 'Ensayo sobre la raza,' 6.
8. Ibidem.
9. Ibidem.
10. Regarding the distinction between 'negative eugenics' and 'positive eugenics,' see Claudia Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2004), 31–32.

11. Ernesto Giménez Caballero, *Genio de España. Exaltaciones a una resurrección nacional. Y del mundo* (Barcelona: Ediciones Jerarquía, 1939), 61 [I ed. 1932].
12. Ibidem.
13. Ibidem.
14. 'Fallacia ariana,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 192 (14 August 1934): 2.
15. Ibidem.
16. Benito Mussolini, 'Alla fonte,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 204 (29 August 1934): 2.
17. Ibidem.
18. Ibidem.
19. Ibidem.
20. Emil Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini* (Milano: Mondadori, 1932), 73. See also Carlo Foà, 'Le genti d'Italia al lume degli studi antropologici,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1934): 880–884. On this topic, cf. Aaron Gillette, *Racial theories in Fascist Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 35–49; Francesco Cassata, *Molti sani e forti. L'eugenetica in Italia* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2006), 158–160.
21. Ludwig, *Colloqui con Mussolini*, 73.
22. Giuseppe Bianchini, 'Mistica e politica razzista,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1934): 577.
23. Ibidem.
24. Ibidem.
25. Giovanni Selvi, 'Il mito di razza,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1934): 806.
26. Ibidem. Also see G. M. Beltramini, 'Razzismo,' *Libro e Moschetto* 4 (26 January 1935): 1.
27. Selvi, 'Il mito di razza,' 807.
28. For an in-depth analysis of the figure of Telesio Interlandi, see Francesco Cassata, *'La Difesa della razza.' Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista* (Torino: Einaudi, 2008). On Interlandi's entourage see also Cassata, *Molti sani e forti. L'eugenetica in Italia*, 220–262; Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, 96, 138; Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1993), 141–143, 259–260, 272–273 [I ed. 1961]; Renzo De Felice, *Autobiografia del fascismo. Antologia di testi fascisti 1919–1945* (Milano: Einaudi, 2004), 364–368.
29. Cassata, *'La Difesa della razza.' Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, 7.
30. Ibidem, 9.
31. Ibidem. Cf. Patrick Bernhard, 'Blueprints of Totalitarianism: How Racist Policies in Fascist Italy Inspired and Informed Nazi Germany,' *Fascism* 6 (2017): 127–162.

32. The sociologist Gustave Le Bon believed that the 'soul of race' was formed from the set of 'moral and intellectual characters' and that 'this aggregate of psychological elements' constituted the 'national character'. Moving from this assumption, he asserted that there were no real races in a biological and scientific sense but 'only historical races created by cases of conquests, immigration, politics, and thus formed through the mixing of individuals of different origins'. Gustave Le Bon, *L'evoluzione dei popoli* (Milano: Monanni, 1927), 19–20, 53. On several occasions, Mussolini declared to be a great admirer of Le Bon's works that he read and widely appreciated. About the French sociologist's influence on Mussolini, see Gentile, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazione*, 249; Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), 157–158, 402–408, 426–427.
33. 'Il discorso dell'Ascensione,' in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (Firenze: La Fenice, 1951–1963), vol. XXII, 361–364. See also 'Il discorso di Mussolini sul programma fascista. Il problema della razza,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* (9 November 1921): 2.
34. 'Il discorso dell'Ascensione,' 362–367.
35. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, 273. See also Francesco Cassata, *Il fascismo razionale. Corrado Gini fra scienza e politica* (Roma: Carocci, 2006), 22–54, 101–109.
36. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, 273. See also Cassata, *Molti sani e forti. L'eugenetica in Italia*, 142–144.
37. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, 273.
38. Tommaso Patrisi, 'Eugenica,' in *Dizionario di politica*, ed. Partito Nazionale Fascista (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1940), vol. II, 94–95. On the topic, see Maria Sophia Quine, 'Racial "Sterility" and "Hyperfecundity" in Fascist Italy: Biological Politics of Sex and Reproduction,' *Fascism* 1 (2012): 92–144.
39. The report of the Minister of Justice Alfredo Rocco and the Royal Decree of 19 October 1930, no. 1398 containing the approval of the definitive version of the Criminal Code Reform are in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 251, 26 October 1930. The quote is on page 4492. On this topic see also Carlo Costamagna, 'Razza,' in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. IV, 27.
40. Patrisi, 'Eugenetica,' 95. Cf. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, 275–277, 307–319. On this topic, see also Mussolini's speech on 18 March 1934, during the second five-yearly conference of the regime: 'The military

strength of the state, the future and the security of the nation are linked to the demographic problem that is insistent in all countries of white race, as it also is in Italy. It is necessary to declare once again peremptorily that the irreplaceable condition for primacy is the number of the population. Without this latter, everything will fall down and die. The “Mother and Child Day”, the tax on celibacy and its moral condemnation—except for some justified cases—the displacement of the cities, the rural remediation, the assistance to maternity and childhood, the maritime and mountain colonies, physical education, youth organisations, hygiene laws, everything contributes to the defence of the race. [...] I refuse to believe that the Italian people of the Fascist time, having to choose whether to live or to die, choose to die. I refuse to believe that between youth that renews its spring waves and old age that declines into dark winters, the Italian people choose the latter. If so, in a few decades the country will offer the infinitely painful spectacle of an aged Italy, an Italy without Italians: in other words, the end of the Nation.’ ‘Per la difesa della razza,’ *Il Popolo d’Italia* 67 (20 March 1934): 2.

41. Patrissi, ‘Eugenetica,’ 95.
42. On the different types of citizenship that Fascism provided, see Giovanni Filippucci Giustiniani, ‘Cittadinanza,’ in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. I, 496.
43. ‘Il Partito e la razza,’ *Gerarchia* 9 (September 1938): 635. Cf. also Simone Malvagna, ‘Ebrei,’ in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. II, 6.
44. The absence of a ‘black problem’ in Italy before the Abyssinia campaign does not imply the total absence of bias against black people in the country. However, such bias, far from being a solely Italian phenomenon or an exclusive and distinctive feature of Fascism, has to be contextualised in the society of that time. Until the mid-twentieth century, anti-black prejudices were common to many Western states. Such prejudices took root especially in countries with long and consolidated colonial traditions, regardless of whether they were authoritarian governments or democratic systems such as in the case of Great Britain or the United States of America. A vast literature exists on this topic. See, among others, Jane Samson, *Race and empire* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Richard J. Perry, *Race and racism: The development of modern racism in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe 1870–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and blacks in Western popular culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Paul Rich, *Race and empire in British politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); George L. Mosse, *Towards the final solution: A history of European racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

45. In these last two cases, those individuals could request Italian citizenship after reaching the age of eighteen, as long as they were not polygamous or convicted of crimes resulting in the loss of political rights. They also had to have passed the primary school exam and own a 'perfect Italian education' (articles 17–19). The text of the Law of 6 June 1933, no. 999, is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 189, 16 August 1933, 3674–3680. Cf. also Carlo Schanzer, 'La carta fondamentale delle colonie dell'Africa Orientale,' in *L'Africa orientale italiana (Eritrea e Somalia)*, ed. Tommaso Sillani (Roma: La Rassegna Italiana, 1933), 135–138.
46. Brian R. Mitchell, *International historical statistics: Africa and Asia* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 38–41.
47. The data on the Ethiopian population in 1936 is in Asmerom Kidane, 'Reestimating the Ethiopian population by age and geographical distribution, 1935–1985,' *Northeast Africa Studies* 3 (1987): 63.
48. Emilio Canevari, 'Pacificare e governare,' *Critica fascista* 15 (1 June 1936): 228.
49. Ibidem.
50. The text of the Royal Decree-Law of 19 April 1937, no. 880, containing 'Sanzioni per i rapporti d'indole coniugale tra cittadini e sudditi' is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 145, 24 June 1937, 2353. On this topic also see Costamagna, 'Razza,' 28–29. Cf. Alberto Sbacchi, *Il colonialismo italiano in Etiopia 1936–1940* (Milano: Mursia, 1980), 224–234.
51. Lidio Cipriani, 'Il razzismo in Italia,' *Gerarchia* 8 (August 1938): 544. About Lidio Cipriani's 'anti-black racism,' see Cassata, 'La Difesa della razza.' *Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, 226–245.
52. Ibidem, 545–547. On this topic, see Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 257–258.
53. R.d.C., 'Il razzismo nell'Africa Italiana,' *Rivista delle colonie* 10 (October 1938): 1312. Cf. also Lidio Cipriani, 'Razzismo coloniale,' *La difesa della razza* 2 (20 August 1938): 18–20; Carlo Foà, 'Gli effetti eugenetici degli incroci etnici sulla genialità umana,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1935): 895–898; Canevari, 'Pacificare e governare,' 226–228. On this topic, see Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Abissinia 1935–1941* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978), 207–209.
54. Paolo Monelli, 'Donne e buoi dei paesi tuoi,' *La Gazzetta del Popolo* (13 June 1936) reproduced in Giorgio Rochat, *Il colonialismo italiano* (Torino: Loescher, 1974), 191–193.
55. Ibidem, 193.
56. Folco Zambelli, 'Il problema razziale negli U.S.A.,' *Libro e Moschetto* 2 (1 November 1941): 2.

57. The text of the Law of 29 June 1939, no. 1004, is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 169, 21 July 1939, 3299–3301. On this topic, see Alberto Giaccardi, *L'opera del fascismo in Africa* (Milano: Mondadori, 1939), 77–78; Davide Fossa, 'Il nostro razzismo nell'impero,' *L'Azione Coloniale* 15 (13 April 1939): 1.
58. The text of the Law of 13 May 1940, no. 822, is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 166, 17 July 1940, 2626–2627. Cf. Sbacchi, *Il colonialismo italiano in Etiopia 1936–1940*, 134–138.
59. 'Discorso di Trieste,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 261 (19 September 1938), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 146.
60. Ibidem.
61. Ibidem. Cf. also Historicus, 'Razzismo e giudaismo nell'Europa moderna,' *Civiltà fascista* 9 (September 1938): 784–791.
62. 'Il Partito e la razza,' 635.
63. Ibidem.
64. Ibidem.
65. Civiltà Fascista, 'Coscienza della razza,' *Civiltà fascista* 8 (August 1938): 685.
66. Ibidem, 686.
67. Ibidem.
68. Ibidem, 685–686. On the topic see Emilio Gentile, *Il culto del littorio* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993), 180–195.
69. Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 173–192 [I ed. 1997].
70. Cf. Luca La Rovere, 'Totalitarian pedagogy and the Italian youth,' in *The 'New Man' in radical right ideology and practice, 1919–45*, eds. Jorge Dagnino, Matthew Feldman and Paul Stocker (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 19–38; Jorge Dagnino, 'The myth of the New Man in Italian Fascist ideology,' *Fascism* 5 (2016): 130–148.
71. Malvagna, 'Ebrei,' 6.
72. '175° riunione del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 280 (8 October 1938), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 168.
73. Historicus, 'Razzismo e giudaismo nell'Europa moderna,' 798–801. See also Gaetano Napolitano, 'Il mondo economico e la razza,' *Critica fascista* 22 (15 September 1938): 340–341; Giuseppe Maggiore, 'La scuola agli italiani,' *Critica fascista* 23 (1 October 1938): 356–358.
74. Paolo Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia* (Roma: Casa Editrice Pinciana, 1937), 125.
75. Ibidem, 136.
76. Ibidem, 137.
77. Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 159.

78. Fascists were particularly concerned that the construction of a Jewish state in Palestine, which the UK had supported since the Balfour Declaration of 1917, would have strengthened the British position in the eastern Mediterranean and damaged Italian interests. Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 75, 80–86; Lidio Cipriani, ‘Quale la vera responsabile: Albione o Israele?’ *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1940): 518–524; Ellevi, ‘L’ebraismo contro l’Europa,’ *Gerarchia* 9 (September 1940): 501–502; Marco Marchini, ‘Sogni, progetti e insinuazioni ebraiche,’ *Gerarchia* 4 (April 1941): 214–217. In light of the above, in 1938 Mussolini proposed, without success, to settle the Jews coming from every part of the world in some not well-defined territories of Italian Eastern Africa. On this point, see Giuseppe Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, ed. Giordano Bruno Guerri (Milano: Rizzoli, 1982), 132. Cf. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 284–290; Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German–Italian relations and the Jewish question in Italy 1922–1945*, 14–15, 111–112. About Zionist participation in the Spanish Civil War, see Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 86–90, 165; ‘175° riunione del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo,’ 168–169. Cf. José Antonio Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad* (Barcelona: Riopiedras, 1993), 79–83.
79. Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 75–76, 85–87, 90.
80. Although *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—which historiography has recognised as a historical forgery—was published for the first time in 1903 at the instigation of the Russian Tsarist police, its diffusion in Europe and the United States of America dates back to 1919–21. In Italy, Giovanni Preziosi was the first to be impressed by it. He tried to facilitate the diffusion of *The Protocols* by translating them into Italian from their English version but, despite his efforts, the pamphlet did not achieve great success among the Italian Fascists. For Preziosi’s translation of the document, see L’Internazionale Ebraica, *I ‘Protocolli’ dei ‘Savi Anziani’ di Sion* (Roma: Vita italiana, 1938) [I ed. 1937]. Cf. Red, ‘Antisemitismo,’ in *Dizionario di politica*, vol. I, 144–146; Orano, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, 165; Roberto Pavese, ‘Il problema ebraico in Italia,’ *Gerarchia* 6 (June 1942): 256–258; Leonida Villani, ‘Occhio agli ebrei!’ *Gerarchia* 11 (November 1940): 582–583. On *The Protocols*, their origins and interpretation see Sergio Romano, *I falsi protocolli. Il ‘complotto ebraico’ dalla Russia di Nicola II a oggi* (Milano: Longanesi, 2011); De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 51.
81. Loreto Di Nucci, ‘Lo Stato fascista e gli italiani “antinazionali”,’ in *Due nazioni. Legittimazione e delegittimazione nella storia dell’età contemporanea*, eds. Loreto Di Nucci and Ernesto Galli Della Loggia (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003), 179–180. See also Francesco Germinario, *Fascismo e antisemitismo. Progetto razziale e ideologia totalitaria* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2009).

82. Diana Frizzi, 'Guerra agli ebrei,' *Libro e Moschetto* 55, special issue (4 October 1941): 1.
83. Ibidem.
84. Carlo Pignoldi, 'Lettera antiebraica,' *Libro e Moschetto* 3, special issue (14 November 1942): 6.
85. Ibidem. Cf. 'I capisaldi della politica razzista nelle indicazioni del Segretario del Partito all'Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista,' *Libro e Moschetto* 20–21 (30 August 1938): 3; 'Il razzismo e lo spirito borghese,' *Libro e Moschetto* 3 (30 November 1938): 3; Domenico Vanelli, 'E gli ebrei?' *Libro e Moschetto* 33 (5 April 1941): 8. On the racist campaign of the GUF, see Luca La Rovere, *Storia dei Guf. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista 1919–1943* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003), 339–349.
86. About the content of Fascist legislation against Jews, see the main normative provisions: R.D.L. of 5 September 1938, no. 1390, containing 'Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 209, 13 September 1938, 3878; R.D.L. of 7 September 1938, no. 1381, containing 'Provvedimenti nei confronti degli ebrei stranieri,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 208, 12 September 1938, 3871; R.D.L. of 23 September 1938, no. 1630, containing 'Istituzione di scuole elementari per fanciulli di razza ebraica,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 245, 25 October 1938, 4446; R.D.L. of 17 November 1938, no. 1728, containing 'Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza italiana,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 264, 19 November 1938, 4794–4796; R.D.L. of 22 December 1938, no. 2111, containing 'Disposizioni relative al collocamento in congedo assoluto ed al trattamento di quiescenza del personale militare delle Forze armate dello Stato di razza ebraica,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 30, 6 February 1939, 618–621; Circular of the Ministry of the Interior no. 9270/Demographics and Race of 22 December 1938 that implemented the R.D.L. of 17 November 1938, no. 1728, containing 'Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza italiana'; Law of 29 June 1939, no. 1054, containing 'Disciplina dell'esercizio delle professioni da parte dei cittadini di razza ebraica,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 179, 2 August 1939, 3578–3582; Law of 9 October 1942, no. 1420, containing 'Limitazioni di capacità degli appartenenti alla razza ebraica residenti in Libia,' in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 298, 17 December 1942, 4986–4990. Cf. also Michele Sarfatti, *Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005), 3–43, 70–87; Michele Sarfatti, *Mussolini contro gli ebrei. Cronaca dell'elaborazione delle leggi del 1938* (Torino: Zamorani, 1994), 28–77.
87. Costamagna, 'Razza,' 26.

88. Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1990), 158; Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, 136.
89. The quote is in the *Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti* that was published for the first time with the title ‘Il Fascismo e i problemi della razza,’ *Il Giornale d’Italia* 166 (15 July 1938): 1. It should be noted that, although the newspaper was dated 15 July, the article was published the day before, on 14 July 1938.
90. Ibidem, 1. See also ‘Il razzismo fascista,’ *Critica fascista* 21 (1 September 1938): 322–323.
91. For a detailed analysis of the violent anti-Semitic campaign launched by *Il Tevere* from the early months of 1934, see De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 140–148.
92. The quote by Telesio Interlandi is reproduced in Cassata, ‘*La Difesa della razza*.’ *Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, 40. On the conceptional and drafting phases of the Manifesto, see Aaron Gillette, ‘The origins of the “Manifesto of racial scientists”,’ *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3 (2001): 305–323; Cassata, ‘*La Difesa della razza*.’ *Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, 38–43.
93. Beyond the anti-Semitic behaviour of these circles, many inside the Church adopted an attitude of Christian piety towards persecuted Jews. Despite the Fascist prohibition, several priests continued to celebrate mixed marriages and impart the sacrament of baptism to children born of Jewish parents to allow the Jewish community to escape persecution. Pope Pius XI also helped the Semitic population secretly, and as time went by, increasingly. Nonetheless, these initiatives do not absolve the Church of its responsibilities entirely. Indeed, for a long time, the Holy See never condemned the racist legislation of 1938 clearly and limited itself to expressing a mere tepid disappointment. About the controversial position of the Church towards Jews, see Renato Moro, *La Chiesa e lo sterminio degli ebrei* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), 35–67; Valerio De Cesaris, ‘The Vatican, racism and antisemitism between Pius XI and Pius XII,’ *Telos* 164 (2013): 117–149; Valerio De Cesaris, ‘Le reazioni della Chiesa cattolica all’antisemitismo fascista,’ *Annali della fondazione Ugo La Malfa* XXVI (2011): 151–162; Valerio De Cesaris, *Vaticano, fascismo e questione razziale* (Milano: Guerini e associati, 2010), 87–98, 187–192, 211–234; Giovanni Miccoli, ‘Santa Sede, “questione ebraica” e antisemitismo alla fine dell’Ottocento,’ in *Nel nome della razza*, ed. Alberto Burgio (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), 215–246; De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 31–43, 292–298; Roberto Vivarelli, ‘Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano,’ *Rivista storica italiana* CXXI, 2 (2009): 747.

94. On the reasons for the failed development of autochthonous racism in the peninsula, see De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 27–30. On ‘political anti-Semitism,’ cf. Vivarelli, ‘Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano,’ 746.
95. ‘Il cavallo di Troia della discriminazione,’ *Libro e Moschetto* 47 (25 July 1942): 1.
96. Ibidem.
97. Ibidem. See also Emilio Gamassini, ‘Battaglia antiebraica,’ *Libro e Moschetto* 45 (11 July 1942): 1. On this point, cf. Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell’Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, 177–178.
98. The perfect integration of the Jewish community in the country explains the reluctant and scarce support of the population for the anti-Semitic policy of the regime that Italian people, generally speaking, accepted with substantial (even if equally guilty and despicable) indifference. See De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 6–16; Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 770; Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell’Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, 32–34, 43–44. For detailed information on the Jewish census of 1938, see Sarfatti, *Mussolini contro gli ebrei. Cronaca dell’elaborazione delle leggi del 1938*, 131–176.
99. Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 741.
100. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 73–74.
101. Ilaria Pavan, *Il podestà ebreo. La storia di Renzo Ravenna tra fascismo e leggi razziali* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 28–56, 97–161. Cf. Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 744.
102. Iael Nidam Orvieto, ‘Lettere a Mussolini: gli ebrei italiani e le leggi antiebraiche,’ *La rassegna mensile di Israel*, vol. LXIX, no. 1, tome I (January–April 2003): 339–340.
103. Ibidem, 341.
104. Ibidem, 341.
105. Ibidem, 342.
106. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 21.
107. Ibidem, 13–14.
108. Ibidem, 67–69. The testimony of Giuseppe Bottai seems to confirm this position. On 10 August 1938 Bottai wrote in his diary: ‘it is currently underway the journalistic attempt to demonstrate continuity in the Duce’s racist thought. People remember the pages of the *Colloqui* written by Ludwig. They remember that Mussolini chose Ludwig to collect his historical confidences and that he is a Jew. Moreover, people remember that Mussolini’s first biographer is a Jew as well as many senators that he nominated. Today (Emilio) Brodero told me these singular episodes. In 1928 he was chairing an examination board at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: fourteen winners and, among them, some Jews. He explained the situation to Mussolini, who told him literally: “Well,

- nominate them! In foreign administration, there are only four Jews, and they work well. Remember, I will never make discriminations since I do not want to create a matter of religion or race. Never, remember!" In 1933, Bodrero, at the time President of Professionals and Artists, was concerned about Jewish infiltrations in the student community of Padua [...]. Even if Mussolini was informed, he refused to take restrictive and prohibitive measures.' Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, 129.
109. Benito Mussolini, 'Ebrei, bolscevismo e sionismo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 250 (19 October 1920): 3.
 110. Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 742.
 111. Nahum Goldmann, 'La crisi dell'ebraismo,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1934): 851. See also Gioacchino Contri, 'Sionismo e ebraismo: problemi assurdi,' *Critica fascista* 17 (1 September 1934): 325–326; Orazio Cancelliere, 'Il nazismo, gli ebrei e noi,' *Libro e Moschetto* 62 (8 December 1934): 1. Cf. Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German-Italian relations and the Jewish question in Italy 1922–1945*, 23–28.
 112. Nicola D'Elia, 'Far-Right Parties and the Jews in the 1930s: The antisemitic turn of Italian Fascism reconsidered through a comparison with the French case,' *S: I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention, methods, documentation* 2 (2018): 47.
 113. The text of the Royal Decree of 30 October 1930, no. 1731, containing 'Norme sulle Comunità israelitiche e sulla Unione delle Comunità medesime' is in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, no. 11, 15 January 1931, 194–200.
 114. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 127–138; Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 742, 744.
 115. Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 738. On the Jews condition in Italy between 1938 and 1943, see Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, 180–245. On the Jewish persecution in the period 1943–1945, see Shira Klein, *Italy's Jews from emancipation to Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 109–130; Giuseppe Mayda, *Storia della deportazione dall'Italia, 1943–1945. Militari, ebrei e politici nei lager del Terzo Reich* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002); Giuseppe Mayda, *Gli ebrei sotto Salò. La persecuzione antisemita, 1943–1945* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978).
 116. Cf. Marie-Anne Matard Bonucci, *L'Italia fascista e la persecuzione degli ebrei* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), 124–138. Italian translation of the original *L'Italie fasciste et la persécution des juifs* (Paris: Perrin, 2007); Francesco Germinario, *Fascismo e antisemitismo. Progetto razziale e ideologia totalitaria* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2009), 13–14.

117. See Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo*, 186; Aaron Gillette, *Racial theories in Fascist Italy*, 52–54; Franklin H. Adler, ‘Why Mussolini turned on the Jews,’ *Patterns of Prejudice* 3 (2005): 285–300.
118. See De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 246–252; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), 339–342; Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German–Italian relations and the Jewish question in Italy 1922–1945*, 27–28, 99–103, 126.
119. Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 758, 768–769.
120. Meir Michaelis, ‘Il Conte Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo quale antesig-nano dell’Asse Roma-Berlino,’ *Nuova rivista storica* LXI (January–June 1977): 116–149.
121. ‘L’Anschluss,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 67–71. The quote is on page 71.
122. Ibidem.
123. Hitler’s words are reproduced in a footnote to ‘Brindisi al cancelliere del Reich,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 96–97.
124. ‘Brindisi al cancelliere del Reich,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 94–96. The quotes are on page 95.
125. Cf. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)*, 483–484.
126. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)*, 485–486.
127. On Mussolini’s campaign against the bourgeoisie, see ‘Discorso al Consiglio Nazionale del PNF del 25 Ottobre 1938,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 185–196. On the connections between the anti-bourgeois campaign and the anti-Jewish turn, see Gillette, *Racial theories in Fascist Italy*, 59; Adler, ‘Why Mussolini turned on the Jews,’ 297–298.
128. ‘Rapporto sui problemi di politica estera letto il 4 febbraio 1939 al supremo consesso del regime. Relazione per il Gran Consiglio,’ in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXXVII, 152.
129. The Diplomatic Information no. 14 of February 1938 was proof of Mussolini’s ambiguous position. First, the Duce admitted: ‘the existence of Jews in Italy does not necessarily mean that there is a specifically Italian Jewish problem. [...] In Italy, the mass of Jews oscillates between 50,000 and 60,000 units on a population of forty-four million people. The Fascist government never thought, nor it thinks now, to take political, economic, moral measures against the Jews as such, except, of course, in the case they were hostile to the regime.’ Nevertheless, in the concluding part of the document, he contradicted what he had just

asserted, affirming: 'however, the Fascist government reserves the right to watch over the activity of Jews who recently arrived in our country. Moreover, it will ensure that the part of Jews in the life of the nation is not disproportionate to the intrinsic and individual merits and the numerical importance of their community.' This assertion prefigured the Fascist intention of exercising strict control over Jews, which was legally formalised only a few months later. The text of the Diplomatic Information no. 14 is in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 494–495. Cf. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)*, 487–500; De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 247.

130. 'Discorso di Trieste,' 146.

131. On 5 August 1938, in the Diplomatic Information no. 18, Mussolini used the famous expression 'to discriminate does not mean to persecute', in the attempt to demonstrate that the Fascist government had no 'special plan of persecution against the Jews as such'. However, he made this premise with the evident purpose of absolving himself. Indeed, the Duce did not hesitate to indicate the true political line of the party and the regime, declaring: 'The Jews, in Italy, in the metropolitan territory are 44,000 [...] the proportion would be a Jew on 1,000 inhabitants. It is clear that, from now on, Jews' participation in the global life of the state will have to be and will be appropriate to this ratio [...]. Therefore, there is no doubt that the time is ripe for Italian racism and it is also undoubted that it will become the spiritual patrimony of our people, the fundamental basis of our state and an element of security for our empire.' The text of the Diplomatic Information no. 18 is in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 497–498.

132. The text of the letter is reproduced in Vivarelli, *Le leggi razziali nella storia del fascismo italiano*, 759.

133. Ibidem.

134. The quote is taken from a meeting between Bottai and Aldo Ascoli, Vice President of the Union of the Italian Israelite Communities, which took place on 7 October 1938. The verbatim report of the meeting is reproduced in Meir Michaelis, 'Giuseppe Bottai, la pretesa totalitaria e la svolta razziale. Riflessioni sui diari di un gerarca fascista,' *Rivista storica italiana* CXIII, 2 (2001): 483. Cf. Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, 136–137. About Giuseppe Bottai's position towards the Italian anti-Semitic turn see the already mentioned Michaelis, 'Giuseppe Bottai, la pretesa totalitaria e la svolta razziale. Riflessioni sui diari di un gerarca fascista,' 457–496; Loreto Di Nucci, 'Bottai,' in *Dizionario del fascismo*, eds. Sergio Luzzato and Victoria de Grazia (Torino: Einaudi, 2003): 194–198; Giordano Bruno Guerri, *Giuseppe Bottai, fascista* (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), 146–150.

135. Bottai, *Diario 1935–1944*, 130.

136. Ibidem, 133.
137. Roger Griffin, *Fascism: An introduction to comparative fascist studies* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), 45.
138. Enzo Collotti, *Il fascismo e gli ebrei. Le leggi razziali in Italia* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 38–39.
139. Angelo Ventura, *Il fascismo e gli ebrei. Il razzismo antisemita nell'ideologia e nella politica del regime* (Roma: Donzelli, 2013), 67–68.
140. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato*. I. *L'Italia in guerra 1940–1943*. 2. *Crisi e agonia del regime* (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), 675–676; Rosario Romeo, *Italia mille anni. Dall'età feudale all'Italia moderna ed europea* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1996), 197.
141. The discriminatory clauses of the Royal Decree-Law of 17 November 1938, no. 1728, previously described, made it impossible to realise a total and definitive separation of Aryan people from the Semitic population from the very beginning. Regarding the difficulties of the regime in making a clear distinction between Italians and Jews, see the report of Secretary of State Buffarini-Guidi on the first year of implementation of racial measures. In appendix to Luigi Preti, *I miti dell'impero e della razza nell'Italia degli anni '30* (Roma: Opere nuove, 1965), 134–140. As regards colonial legislation, Articles 9 and 10 of the Law of 13 May 1940, no. 822 that abolished the right of citizenship for mixed-race children provided an exception for those who had already acquired it or—having reached the age of twelve—had already applied for it. In this second case, individuals could obtain Italian citizenship as long as they also had an Italian education, a primary school certificate, good civic, moral and political conduct, and no criminal convictions leading to the loss of political rights. The lack of organicity in the colonial legislation also emerged from the discrepancies existing in the treatment of Libyan natives compared with the Italian subjects in Eastern Africa and the absence of legislation that, as in AOI, regulated mixed unions in the Libyan territories. Indeed, the Organic Law for the administration of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica of 26 June 1927, no. 1013, established that 'Libyan Italian citizens', in consideration of their 'different degree of civilisation' compared with the natives of East Africa, enjoyed several civic and political rights and could acquire metropolitan citizenship if they met specific requirements. In particular, they must have reached the age of 21. They had to not be polygamous. They were not to be guilty of crimes involving the loss of political rights, and they must have passed the third-grade exam. Moreover, they should have met one of the following conditions: have served faithfully one of the military bodies of the state; have played a public role in government; have been decorated by the government; or have been born to a Libyan Italian citizen who became a metropolitan citizen when the applicant had already reached

their twenty-first year. The Royal Decree-Law no. 70 of 9 January 1939 abrogated the right to obtain metropolitan citizenship and established second-rate citizenship—known as ‘special Italian citizenship’—for Libyans who met specific requirements. Law no. 822 of 13 May 1940 compared the condition of Italian Libyan citizens to the condition of the natives in the Italian Eastern Africa. A similar situation occurred for Italian citizens of the Aegean islands who, following Article 12 of the law above mentioned, were deprived of the possibility to obtain full Italian citizenship that Royal Decree-Law no. 1379 of 19 October 1933 previously recognised them. The normative references are: ‘Legge organica per l’amministrazione della Tripolitania e della Cirenaica’ of 26 June 1927, no. 1013, in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d’Italia*, no. 148, 28 June 1927, 2725; Royal Decree-Law no. 2012 of 3 December 1934, containing ‘Ordinamento organico per l’amministrazione della Libia,’ 5790; Royal Decree-Law of 9 January 1939, no. 70, containing ‘Aggregazione delle quattro province libiche al territorio del Regno d’Italia e concessione ai libici musulmani di una cittadinanza italiana speciale con statuto personale e successorio musulmano,’ in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d’Italia*, no. 28, 3 February 1939, 583–584; Royal Decree-Law of 19 October 1933, no. 1379, containing ‘Acquisto della piena cittadinanza italiana da parte degli abitanti delle Isole italiane dell’Egeo,’ in *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d’Italia*, no. 255, 3 November 1933, 5030. Cf. Alessandro Lessona, ‘Le colonie italiane nel quadro europeo,’ *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1932): 550–551; Schanzer, ‘La carta fondamentale delle colonie dell’Africa Orientale,’ 134–135; Senato del Regno and Camera dei Deputati (eds.), *La legislazione fascista 1929–1934 (VII–XII)* (Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1935), 649–650. On this topic see also Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991), 240; Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell’espansione coloniale italiana*, 348–350.

142. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 55.

143. For the history of Jews in Spain see, among others, Joseph López, *Los judíos en España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005); Georg Bossong, *I sefarditi* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010); Anna Foa, *Gli ebrei in Europa. Dalla peste nera all’emancipazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1992), 95–134; Paloma Díaz-Mas, *Sephardism: The Jews from Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Lacava, ‘Los judíos en la época de la expulsión,’ in *Los sefardíes: cultura y literatura*, ed. Paloma Díaz-Mas (San Sebastián: Universidad del País Vasco, 1987): 35–48; Francisco Ruiz Gómez and Manuel Espaldas Burgos (eds.), *Encuentros en Sefarad. Actas del congreso internacional ‘Los judíos en la historia de España’* (Ciudad Real: Instituto de Estudios Manchegos, 1987); Yitzhak Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961).

144. The numerical data is in Bossong, *I sefarditi*, 56.

145. Tovar, *El imperio de España*, 55.
146. Ibidem.
147. Ibidem.
148. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, 'Franco y los judíos en la segunda guerra mundial,' in *Los judíos en la historia de España*, eds. Javier Tusell and José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Imprenta provincial, 2007), 165.
149. About doctor Ángel Pulido's pro-Sephardic campaign see Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad*, 23–26; Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)*, 261–264; Bossong, *I sefarditi*, 105–106.
150. The text of the Royal Decree of 20 December 1924 is in *Gaceta de Madrid*, no. 356, 21 December 1924, 1322–1323.
151. Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad*, 46; Danielle Rozenberg, *La España contemporánea y la cuestión judía. Retejiendo los hilos de la memoria y de la historia* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2010), 58–59.
152. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, 'La eclosión del antisemitismo español: de la II República al holocausto,' in *El antisemitismo en España*, eds. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida and Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2007), 183. Cf. José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, 'El discurso antisemita en el fascismo español,' in *Los judíos en la historia de España*, 105.
153. On the topic see Berndt Rother, 'Españoles sefardíes y primeros falangistas,' in *Jewish studies at the turn of the twentieth century: Proceedings of the 6th EAJIS Congress*, eds. Judit Targarona and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 616–624. Cf. also Jesús Antonio Cid, 'Intelectuales españoles ante los sefardíes en torno a 1930: dos visiones de una judería balcánica (Skopje-Uskub),' in *Lengua y cultura sefardí. Estudios en memoria de Samuel G. Armistead*, eds. Nicolás Asensio Jiménez and Sara Sánchez Bellido (Madrid: Fundación Ramón Areces y Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pindal, 2015), 143–178. For a critical interpretation of Caballero's position on Jews see Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)*, 343–347.
154. 'Alemania: Nazis y Judíos,' *FE* 2 (11 January 1934): 8.
155. Ibidem. In that period, and specifically in 1935, the famous assault at the department stores *Sepu* in Madrid owned by some German Jewish refugees and perpetrated by a group of camisas azules took place. Nonetheless, as recent studies illustrated convincingly, it was not ascribable to the deep anti-Semitism of the Spanish fascists but constituted an isolated case, mainly linked to economic and commercial reasons more than a real intent of Falangist persecution against Jews as such. See Álvarez Chillida, 'Franco y los judíos en la segunda guerra mundial,' 271–273.
156. 'Alemania: Nazis y Judíos,' 8.

157. Rodríguez Jiménez, 'El discurso antisemita en el fascismo español,' 98–99.
158. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Los Protocolos de los Sabios de Sión,' *Libertad* 37 (22 February 1932): 6.
159. Ibidem. As in Fascist Italy, also in the Spanish fascism *The Protocols* were never included among the fundamental texts of the movement and the party. On their diffusion in Spain see Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)*, 301–308; Javier Domínguez Arribas, *El enemigo judeo-masónico en la propaganda franquista (1936–1945)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2009), 69–80; Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad*, 81–92.
160. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Los enemigos de España,' *Libertad* 3 (27 June 1931).
161. Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'Señales del Estado antinacional,' *Igualdad* 6 (19 December 1932): 6. See also Diego Victoria, 'La prensa mundial en manos de los judíos,' *Destino* 108 (12 August 1939): 5; Onésimo Redondo Ortega, 'El mundo obrero y los judíos,' *Igualdad* 24 (24 April 1933): 6; J. Misol, 'Raza Maldita,' *Igualdad* 9 (9 January 1933): 6. About Onésimo Redondo's anti-Semitic position see Matteo Tomasoni, *El caudillo olvidado. Vida, obra y pensamiento de Onésimo Redondo (1905–1936)* (Granada: Comares, 2017), 252–269.
162. See, for instance, Juan Beneyto Pérez, *Nacionalsocialismo* (Barcelona: Labor, 1934). On the topic, cf. Xosé Manoel Nuñez Seixas, 'Falangismo, Nacionalsocialismo y el mito de Hitler en España (1931–1945),' *Revista de estudios políticos* 169 (July–September 2015): 20; Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)*, 366, 381–384; Schulze Schneider, 'La propaganda alemana en España 1942–1944,' *Espacio, tiempo y forma* 7 (1994): 371–386.
163. Álvarez Chillida, *El antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812–2002)*, 352. Álvarez Chillida took the expression 'anti-Semitism without Jews' from Manfred Böcker, *Antisemitismus ohne Juden. Die Zweite Republik, die antirepublikanische Rechte und die Juden. Spanien 1931 bis 1936* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000).
164. See 'El peligro judío,' *Pueblo* 9 (29 August 1942): 7; 'La raza,' *Destino* 82 (25 September 1938): 1; José María Uranga, 'Una sorprendente "Fiesta de la Raza",' *Destino* 81 (18 September 1938): 2. Cf. Álvarez Chillida, 'La eclosión del antisemitismo español: de la II República al holocausto,' 187.
165. On Franco's position towards Jews, see Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad*, 68–70; Domínguez Arribas, *El enemigo judeo-masónico en la propaganda franquista (1936–1945)*, 83–97; Álvarez Chillida, 'La eclosión del antisemitismo español: de la II República al holocausto,' 188–191; David Pérez Guillén, 'Mussolini, Franco y los judíos: una relación

- controvertida,' *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 20 (2014), <https://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/1754#tocto1n4>.
166. The Ministry of Public Order was established through the Law of 30 January 1938 concerning the organisation of the central state administration. The text of the Law is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 467, 31 January 1938. The Law of 29 December 1938 that established the suppression of the Ministry of Public Order and the transfer of its functions to the Ministry of the Interior is in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 183, 31 December 1938. Cf. José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, 'El antisemitismo en el franquismo y en la transición,' in *El antisemitismo en España*, 253; Paul Preston, *El holocausto español. Odio y exterminio en la Guerra Civil y después* (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2011), 632.
 167. See Lisbona, *Retorno a Sefarad*, 115–120; Álvarez Chillida, 'La eclosión del antisemitismo español: de la II República al holocausto,' 197–202; Álvarez Chillida, 'Franco y los judíos en la segunda guerra mundial,' 176–178.
 168. On the División Azul see, among others, Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, *Camarada invierno. Experiencia y memoria de la División Azul (1941–1945)* (Madrid: Crítica, 2016); Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, 'El Tercer Reich, la Wehrmacht y la División Azul, 1941–1945: Memorias e imágenes contrapuestas,' *Ayer* 69 (2008): 47–72; Xavier Moreno Juliá, *La División Azul. Sangre española en Rusia* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004); 3; Gerald R. Kleinfeld and Lewis Tambs, *Hitler's Spanish legion: The Blue Division in Russia in WWII* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979).
 169. Dionisio Ridruejo, *Los cuadernos de Rusia: Diario* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1978), 80–81. On this topic see Núñez Seixas, 'El Tercer Reich, la Wehrmacht y la División Azul, 1941–1945: Memorias e imágenes contrapuestas,' 50; Núñez Seixas, *Camarada invierno. Experiencia y memoria de la División Azul (1941–1945)*, 295–319.



The Arbiters of Post-war Europe: Fascist and Falangist Nations in the New Nazi Continental Order

THE NEW FACE OF EUROPE

On the eve of the Second World War, a promising future seemed to be unfolding for the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts. Within their respective countries, all opposition had been crushed, and the Italian and Spanish nations appeared renewed in light of the Fascist and Falangist precepts. Proclaiming themselves the heirs of great imperial races, Fascism and Falangism were preparing to fulfil their civilising mission in Europe. According to their ideologues, a new historical epoch was about to begin. The Old Continent would undergo an evolution in a totalitarian, anti-democratic and anti-Bolshevik sense, as the successes of the Fascist and National Socialist revolutions foreshadowed. The concept of a New European Order, widely used in that period, ultimately meant this: the complete overturning of the system of states that had emerged from Versailles in 1919 and the profound transformation of the political,

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economic and social dynamics of the continent for the sole benefit of the fascist powers.¹

The *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* were resolute in assuming a central function in this New European Order. However, the Führer's ambitions were different. The German National Socialist projects for the *Neuordnung Europas* contemplated the exclusive leadership of Germany based on its alleged civilising, financial and martial supremacy. This was what Hitler imagined when he wrote *Mein Kampf* in 1925 and his 'second book' in 1928, which indicated the main objectives of his political action. These included the unification of all communities of Germanic origin, the racial purification of the whole continent, and the conquest of German 'living space', namely the extension of its hegemony towards the East.² On the other hand, as Mark Mazower points out, ruling Europe implied gaining an absolutely central role in the global geopolitical framework.³ Consequently, for National Socialism, any form of collaboration was inconceivable as 'no one mattered or could be trusted politically apart from the Germans themselves'.⁴ Crucially, Enzo Collotti stresses that Nazi domain plans aimed at a 'one-way integration of Europe'.⁵ This was founded on the idea of Aryan superiority and the relative subordination of every other state and people 'placed in order of decreasing importance, from the condition of satellites to candidates for the pure and simple physical disappearance'.⁶ Pro-Nazi countries could not even aspire to an auxiliary role since their political ambitions and independence could be trampled on at any moment without hesitation. No amicable and beneficial partnerships were even taken into consideration. The National Socialists' ultimate goal, to be pursued at any cost, was the Germanisation of the whole of Europe.

The methods the Nazis employed to satisfy this goal were manifold. They imposed German economic dominance by establishing advantageous exchange rates and clearing arrangements to secure their control over trade, as they had done with Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia even before the Second World War. They massively exploited the food, mining and industrial resources of the occupied states, intimidating local workers into forced labour. The Nazis also hypothesised the creation of a large continental autarchic and monopolistic organisation to snatch Europe from Soviet and US hegemonies by increasing European competitiveness in the global market. Moreover, they envisaged the birth of a centralised monetary system based on the German mark that, in their plans, would

have replaced the gold standard once the war had ended.⁷ The annihilation of all 'non-Germanisable' elements that were foreign to the *Volk* was added to these economic measures.⁸ National Socialism eradicated entire national cultures by virtue of their alleged inferiority through a massive forced displacement of people within the occupied areas. This was the fate of political opponents, slave populations, gypsies, the disabled and homosexuals, many of whom found death in the Nazi extermination camps. Jews faced the same tragic destiny when, on 31 July 1941, the Reich Vice-Chancellor Hermann Göring instructed the Security Office Director Reinhard Heydrich to make the necessary arrangements for the 'final solution'.⁹

The New European Order would have been based on these assumptions, even if the plan for the total reconstruction of the Old Continent was not yet well defined when Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Nonetheless, the Reich had already taken the first steps in that direction. The Anschluss, the takeover of Sudetenland, the establishment of the protectorate in Bohemia and Moravia and the consequent dismemberment of Czechoslovakia were unequivocal signs of the re-emergence of German power. At the same time, those who considered the National Socialist regime a beacon of civilisation saw these events as obvious clues to the dawn of a new totalitarian era that was to revolutionise the face of the whole of Europe in the short term.

From the autumn of 1939, Nazi military achievements confirmed that conviction. In just over a month, Germany gained control of western Poland, as had been stipulated in the secret agreement with the Soviet Union on 23 August that same year. On 9 April 1940, the troops of Generals von Falkenhorst and Kaupisch quickly occupied Denmark and invaded Norway, which capitulated on 8 June. On 10 May, the Wehrmacht launched the Yellow Operation. This quickly led to the occupation of Holland and Belgium, the annexation of Luxembourg and the campaign in France, which concluded on 22 June with the signing of an armistice by the head of the Vichy collaborationist government, Marshal Philippe Petain, and the German occupation of the northern part of the country.¹⁰

The offensive on the Eastern Front was not far out of sight. In October 1940, German troops settled in Romania. In March 1941, other contingents were set up in Bulgaria. In April, the Wehrmacht intervened in Yugoslavia to suppress a British-backed coup attempt. In the same month,

it rushed to support its Italian allies after the failure of Mussolini's 'lightning war' in Greece. Nevertheless, the ascending parabola of National Socialism reached its summit with the 'ideological war' of the Third Reich. With the full consent of the other leaders of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party), Hitler attacked Russia on 22 June 1941. In the summer, the German army occupied the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine, arriving in October at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad. The Blue Operation in June 1942 re-launched the attack on the USSR after the Red Army's counter-offensive in December 1941–January 1942. The Führer's troops succeeded in penetrating the southern part of the country, reaching the Caucasus oil fields and the Don and Volga areas, and proceeding towards Stalingrad. This marked the peak of the territorial expansion of Nazi Germany, whose advance appeared unstoppable at that time.

The ensuing war events gave the lie to that impression of success. The long and bloody battle of Stalingrad from July 1942 to early 1943 ended in a stinging defeat for the German troops led by General Friedrich Paulus. The Soviet army and the civilian population—exhorted by Stalin to resist indefinitely—succeeded in overcoming the siege and counterattacking. On 2 February 1943, the last German units in the city were forced to surrender, while the Reich began its retreat from the Eastern Front in the rear.¹¹ However, up to only a few months earlier, nothing had suggested such a denouement. Hitler's army, which had embarked on its continental *Blitzkrieg* in the autumn of 1939, had proved its superior strength by decisively overcoming any resistance. Undoubtedly, the setback at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad was a heavy blow to the Wehrmacht. Nonetheless, the Nazi war machine managed to resume its offensive towards the end of the Russian winter. The *Generalplan Ost*, the German master plan for the East, was still in effect, and Hitler was staunchly determined to complete it.¹² Indeed, eastward expansion was central to the Führer's domination project since, as Mazower observes, in the East the National Socialists 'imagined they had a *tabula rasa* on which to engrave as they pleased'.¹³

The situation was different in the West, where the Nazis did not have the same freedom of action. There, Hitler had to proceed with caution 'because of collaborationist systems and ethnic affinities' which prevented the realisation of radical upheavals and suggested the conservation of an ostensible status quo.¹⁴ The fact remains that, at the dawn of Operation Barbarossa, almost all European countries gravitated into the sphere

of influence of the Third Reich. Some of them were satellites, formally independent and sovereign states that were de facto in the German orbit, including Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Finland. Others were regions controlled by National Socialist direct civilian or military authority. This was the case of Poland, Ukraine, Norway and the Netherlands, on the one hand, and Belgium and northern France, on the other. Annexations occurred in the already mentioned cases of Austria, Sudetenland and Luxembourg, but also Gdansk, western Prussia, Posen, Polish Silesia, northern Slovenia, Alsace, Moselle, Eupen and Malmédy. There were also some local governments under German protection, including the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Slovakia, Denmark, Vichy France, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.¹⁵ Considering the circumstances, it is not surprising that some were confident they would soon see a new totalitarian Europe arise. Among them were the Italian Fascists and the Spanish Falangists, who resolutely refused to perform only an ancillary function in the post-war order envisaged by Nazi Germany.

FIGHTING FOR THE NEW ORDER

In the imagination of the Axis powers and those who supported their plans, the Second World War represented the cathartic event that would have wiped out old Europe, making space for the new Europe to arise. However, on the eve of September 1939, for Spain and Italy questions surrounding their participation in the conflict emerged when Germany invaded Poland, given they were both in positions of severe difficulty and unable to sustain a war effort in the short term.

The Fascist government in Rome was going through a troubled phase. The autarchic programme had not produced the expected outcomes. The campaign in Ethiopia had also led to disappointing results. It had entailed high costs for the country, gaining in return condemnation from the international community. By taking part in the Spanish Civil War, Italy did not improve its position and exhausted its financial and military resources. Moreover, the army was in a precarious state. The large contingents were poorly equipped and scarcely prepared, and there was no solid line of defence on the French border. Not least, the population was largely 'unanimous in detesting the Germans' and was unwilling to take the risks that entry into the Second World War would have entailed.¹⁶

These conditions made the Italian intervention alongside Germany completely inappropriate, which is why Mussolini initially declared Italy as

non-belligerent. It took nine months of constant second thoughts before the Duce broke the delay and, in an act of total rashness in June 1940, called the people to arms. This choice was partly dictated by an issue of honour for the head of the Blackshirts. In April 1940, Mussolini confided to Ciano that it was 'humiliating' to 'sit on [his] hands while others [were writing] history'.¹⁷ Furthermore, in his opinion, neutrality would have damaged the country in the long run, depriving it of the fame of first-order power acquired in almost twenty years of the Fascist regime. As Mussolini pointed out, 'to make a people great, it is necessary to take it into combat', and it was time for Italy to adopt a clear and resolute position in its own interest.¹⁸ Thus, he announced that the 'hour of irrevocable decisions' had come for the nation, which had a duty to honour the alliance with National Socialism and 'be alongside Germany' in those historic circumstances.¹⁹

Beyond the declarations of camaraderie towards the Nazi ally, the Duce's decision to enter the war was primarily based on political convenience. According to Dino Grandi's testimony, Hitler's campaign in France constituted a real turning point in this regard as Mussolini would not have opted for military intervention without the British defeat at Dunkirk.²⁰ Faced with the imminent French collapse, the head of the Blackshirts realised that Italy's direct involvement in the Second World War was a compulsory path and that he had no choice but to undertake a war that had to be short and as autonomous as possible from Germany.²¹ In May 1940 he informed the State Undersecretary at the Ministry of War, General Ubaldo Soddu, that the time was ripe for fighting. Although Soddu raised legitimate concerns regarding the condition of the army, Mussolini peremptorily stated that it would not be possible to make war when they were ready, but rather when they had to.²² He explained that it was a necessary decision falling fully within the logic of the Axis. The Duce's fascination with the myth of a 'new civilisation' was an additional factor that contributed to his decision to abandon hesitation and take up arms.²³ As he stressed in the spring of 1939, the Axis was not only a 'relation between two states' but also 'a meeting of two revolutions' that strongly opposed 'every other idea of contemporary civilisation', of which Marxism and liberal democracy constituted emblematic examples.²⁴ It was also in light of this belief that the supreme leader of Fascism abandoned neutrality, determined to give Italy an active part in the realisation of the future European order.

The circumstances were more complicated in Spain. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the country's entry into the world conflict was an unrealistic option for the new Franco regime, which had to first deal with national reconstruction. The priority was to rejuvenate the Spain's economy which had been brought to its knees by the costs of war, aggravating the country's historical backwardness. Moreover, it was necessary to rebuild cities that had been reduced to rubble and help the exhausted and starving population. Given the internal situation, when the Second World War began, the Caudillo had no choice but to opt for Spanish neutrality. However, the absence of Spain's formal commitment to military activities did not imply its total extraneousness to the conflict. Madrid had shown a benevolent attitude towards the Axis from the start, also in light of German and Italian support for the nationalist deployment in fighting the Popular Front between 1936 and 1939. Thus, following the first rapid Nazi successes on the Western Front, two days after Mussolini had decided to enter the war, the Generalísimo changed the status of Spain to 'non-belligerent' and committed to offering technical and logistical assistance to Berlin and Rome, even if unofficially.²⁵

From the beginning, the Blueshirts greeted enthusiastically the possibility of formalising Spanish participation in the conflict alongside the Germans and the Italians, in the hope of gaining benefits for their country. In their opinion, the 'power of Spain in the world' was a 'necessary assumption' for international relations.²⁶ As early as 1935, Ledesma Ramos had stated that the 'secret of a New European Order' lay in 'Spanish resuscitation'.²⁷ According to him, only a 'strong Spain' could determine the 'next disputes' in the Old Continent since Italy was 'too little vigorous' for such a mission and it would have 'quickly got into the German jaws'.²⁸ Ultimately, at that crucial moment in 'the life of the new Europe', the Spaniards had to 'make an act of presence' and join the Axis forces on the battlefield in the name of 'the blood shed in common' and the 'communion of renovating ideologies'.²⁹

On the other hand, the partnership between the governments of the three countries had already been tested during the Civil War which had represented 'an important arena of transnational cooperation between European fascists', as Arnd Bauerkämper stresses.³⁰ On that occasion, the partnership had proved strong and successful, which led the National Syndicalists to proudly declare that 'the first battle of Europe, the first victory of the New Order, was won in Spain'.³¹ Many Falangists believed

that the thousands of Spanish deaths constituted a ‘decisive contribution to the recent victories in Flanders and the Loire’, which would not have been achieved ‘without the precedent of the Battle of the Ebro’.³² With this in mind, the *camisas azules* tried to convince Franco that the nation should take charge of its ‘historical responsibilities of an international character’.³³ Hitler and Mussolini were fighting the second great battle to save Europe from the continuing interference of liberal-democratic powers and the threat of Bolshevism. It was an epic clash between opposing concepts of politics and society that the Falangists perceived as a ‘national problem of the first magnitude and maximum urgency’ and in which, according to their plans, Spain should be playing a fundamental part.³⁴

There is no doubt that the participation of the government of Madrid in the war would have benefited the Blueshirts. As supporters of Spain’s war mobilisation, National Syndicalists were aware that they would impose themselves as the dominant political formation within the Francoist authoritarian compromise and, consequently, in the whole country.³⁵ However, they were primarily interested in seizing the foreign policy opportunities that the involvement in the conflict would ensure for the nation. On this ground, their promising future prospects coincided with the exaggerated ambition of the Caudillo, who found the Nazi-Fascist plans for conquest very tempting. In fact, there was no particular ideological affinity between Franco and Hitler, and the National Socialist project for a new totalitarian European order had generated little enthusiasm in the Spanish dictator. Nevertheless, Spain could have taken advantage of such plans. Moreover, the Generalísimo was determined to carve out a suitable space for his own political stature on the international scene, and an alliance with Berlin and Rome was one way of achieving this goal.³⁶

The Spanish nationalist government took the first step in this direction on 27 March 1939 when it ratified the Anti-Comintern Pact, joining Germany, Japan and Italy in the struggle against communism. As Paul Preston argues, it was an ‘act of solidarity with the Axis’ that Nicolás Franco—Francisco Franco’s brother and Spain’s ambassador in Lisbon—greeted as a ‘political confession of faith and a clear statement of future policy’.³⁷ Four days later, the signing of the Hispanic-German Friendship Treaty confirmed the Caudillo’s propensity towards Germany and committed Spain to a policy of not harming the Reich or favouring its opponents in any way. Proper diplomatic negotiations to discuss the entry

of Madrid into the Second World War took place the following autumn under the supervision of Ramón Serrano Súñer. Acting as the 'spokesman of the Spanish incorporation in the Axis military device', he tried to persuade the Führer of the key role of Spain in the conflict and started bargaining even before he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 1940.³⁸

The *Cuñadísimo* was still Minister of the Interior when he met Hitler and Ribbentrop in Berlin on 16 September 1940 to discuss the possible Spanish contribution to the war effort. He laid down two conditions for Madrid's entry into the conflict: German technical and military support in terms of supplying equipment to and refuelling the Spanish army; and recognition of Spanish claims to Gibraltar and French Morocco. The latter was among the main imperial objectives of the Falange and represented for Franco what Payne describes as the 'golden illusions and fulfilment of his youth'.³⁹ Nonetheless, the German Foreign Minister's reaction was not as condescending as the Cuñadísimo might have expected. While agreeing to the military assistance that Madrid demanded, Ribbentrop was not amenable to the other conditions. For his part, he made substantially inadmissible counteroffers. He asked for one of the Canary Islands as a strategic base near Gibraltar, and for garrisons in Agadir, Essaouira and the interior of the Moroccan protectorate. Additionally, he demanded economic concessions to cover Spanish Civil War debts and argued for German participation in Moroccan mining activity.

The negotiations ended in stalemate and were resumed in the presence of Franco in Hendaye a month later.⁴⁰ The Caudillo tried to emphasise the advantages that Spanish military intervention would bring to the Axis. Spain was an important outpost in the western Mediterranean as an anti-British function. It was also the closest base for launching a direct attack on North African colonies. Furthermore, its involvement in the conflict would be significant in propaganda terms: it was the continuation of the international anti-Bolshevik crusade and the consolidation of the alliance between Madrid, Berlin and Rome that the Spanish Civil War had successfully tested.⁴¹ However, despite Franco's efforts, the situation did not improve. The Generalísimo's requests remained unacceptable to Germany. Hitler found them excessive set against the support Spanish troops could provide to the Reich, especially given that Spain's expansionist claims in North Africa would create dangerous tensions with Vichy France and Mussolini's Italy.⁴² The Hendaye meeting ended with the signing of a secret protocol providing for the future inclusion of Madrid

in the Axis and its entry into the war, but no date was established. Ultimately, it was just a simple statement of intent that shattered Franco's dreams of glory and dashed National Syndicalist ambitions even more.

Notwithstanding the failure of the official negotiations, the involvement of Spain in the conflict remained as equivocal as it was considerable, as the participation of the 47,000 members of the División Azul in the attack on the Soviet Union confirmed.⁴³ Founded by Serrano Suárez and the Falangist hierarchs Manuel Mora-Figueroa and Dionisio Ridruejo with the Caudillo's approval, this voluntary body included committed *camisas azules*, army commanders, senior government officials and civilians. As Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla stresses, its creation responded to several needs. First, it boosted the 'anti-communist imprint of the Spanish state'.⁴⁴ Moreover, it helped to mitigate the frictions with the Third Reich as a result of Franco's hesitant position on the conflict. Most of all, it represented a 'symbolic means to dampen Falangist disappointment over the Spanish withdrawal from joining the World War decisively'.⁴⁵ By participating in the División Azul, National Syndicalists wanted to show the world their 'close affinity' with the Axis, with the specific purpose of 'remaining in a good disposition in front of the New Order progressively adopted in almost all the continent'.⁴⁶ As an anonymous article in the journal *Escorial* stated in August 1941:

The presence of our comrades on the battlefield is a very eloquent sign that we do not persecute communism just because it is our moral enemy. It is also a sign that we are finally joining the endeavours of the world, which ask for the generous delivery of peoples [...] and men.⁴⁷

The *camisas azules* continued to firmly believe in the need for alignment with Rome and Berlin, as well as in the revolutionary project of a completely fascistised Europe. It was a Europe that, as Saz specifies, 'would have been totalitarian or would not have existed at all'; something the Falangists wanted so enthusiastically that they were willing to pay for it with their blood.⁴⁸

The Founders of a Totalitarian Era

For the Italian and the Spanish fascists, the Second World War was the *laissez-passer* to enter the assembly of the world's greatest countries once the conflict was over. On the battlefield, not only the fate of Europe but

also the power relations between states were at stake. In this context, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts would not have been satisfied with simply jumping on the bandwagon alongside Nazi Germany. According to them, the time was ripe for Fascist and Falangist nations to occupy an authoritative role in the post-war order, and both the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* were determined to secure that role.

In Italy, party theorists began to formulate the first considerations on this issue in the early 1930s when Fascism was already a well-established reality within its national borders. Initial ideas about the New Order were rather vague. They were developed when Mussolini's government began to approach the Third Reich and, especially, when the Second World War broke out.⁴⁹ The absolute centrality of the Italian position in the *Neuordnung Europas* was a cornerstone of Fascist discourse on the future continental system that Rome was to create in partnership with Berlin. The Fascist and National Socialist nations, as creators of 'great works of civilisation and progress', would achieve this extraordinary undertaking.⁵⁰ The New European Order would be based on 'the harmony of the two peoples', acting as a 'political unity' by virtue of the shared values of their national revolutions, the 'awareness of their maturity' and the 'common destiny of imperial grandeur'.⁵¹ In the Blackshirts' interpretation, it was not just an issue of territorial ambitions. On the contrary, it was a 'matter of will and spiritual energies' that, 'at the supreme test of weapons' would entitle Italy and Germany to assume the role of 'avant-garde in the process of the reconstruction of humanity'.⁵²

In Paolo Orano's opinion, it was an inevitable process, since the old world was collapsing and the 'sly construction of Versailles' was falling apart.⁵³ From that moment, the 'recovery of the Italian and German historical fortunes' would have begun, testifying to the inexorable fate of great peoples 'to expand, dominate, and influence' small states.⁵⁴ All pretensions or expectations of minor nations, which were considered responsible for the last 25 years of conflict, would be dismantled to secure continental peace. Italy and Germany would be leading this process and, to this end, they declared themselves willing to 'collaborate with all other peoples of goodwill'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the price to be paid for this collaboration was quite high. It entailed a general understanding of the 'needs' and 'legitimate requests' of Rome and Berlin, which hid, not even covertly, their expansionist claims over Europe.⁵⁶

On the other hand, the Blackshirts saw in the New Order the possibility of completing their project of ideal and physical prolongation of the Fascist nation that the Ethiopian campaign in the mid-1930s and the acquisition of the Albanian 'fifth shore' in 1939 had further enhanced.⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, the Axis would have been the command centre of post-war Europe. However, according to the plans of PNF theorists, Italy and Germany would have administered distinct areas of influence, namely two separate 'imperial communities' that corresponded to the Mediterranean and Middle Europe respectively.⁵⁸ All other states would have merged into the two empires, internally divided into a 'metropolitan order' and an 'imperial regions order'.⁵⁹ Metropolitan citizens, that is, Italian and German 'nationals', belonged to the first order. The populations of all other countries and the subjects of colonies belonged to the second order. The resulting difference of *status civitatis* depended on the nationality of origin and race.⁶⁰ This was proof of 'the irrepressible reality of the nation', which Fascism recognised in the new continental hierarchical organisation and adapted to the future imperial context.⁶¹

In fact, party intellectuals' theories about the division of Europe into a 'Mediterranean living space' and a 'central-Nordic living space' were at odds with the reality of the situation.⁶² The ambitions of Mussolini and the PNF elite collided with Nazi projects, which were all based on the forced and violent imposition of the exclusionary rule of the Third Reich. The Anschluss had already raised concerns about the equity of the relationship between Italy and Germany and, in the first months of the Second World War, it was evident that the Axis's balance leaned towards Berlin. After the successful military campaign in France, few doubts remained about Hitler's plans for absolute domination, in which 'Italy would have played, in the best case, a subordinate role'.⁶³ Despite this, the Italian Fascists never stopped demanding an appropriate place for their nation in post-war Europe. They were confident of making a significant contribution to the continental renewal that, in their eyes, the conflict was 'accelerating vertiginously'.⁶⁴

The Spanish Falangists shared this belief. They welcomed the Nazi project for the *Neuordnung Europas* enthusiastically and declared themselves in favour of Spanish military intervention. According to National Syndicalist theorists, it was an extraordinary opportunity for Spain to regain a position of first-rate power and secure the role of arbiter in the New Order under construction. Spain would be called on, together with Germany and Italy, to 'forge the future of the continent'.⁶⁵ The

three 'creative peoples' would take over Europe and establish a 'tripartite imperium' based on a 'superior total order' that would block 'the way to decadence' and restore justice and peace to the world.⁶⁶ The historian José Antonio Maravall made it clear in 1940: totalitarianism would realise a 'moral order' and make 'Europe possible again'.⁶⁷ It represented 'the reason for Europe'.⁶⁸ Consequently, the German, the Italian and the Spanish peoples, who had made 'an essential contribution' to the totalitarian cause, would finally once again 'govern the other peoples of the world'.⁶⁹

The FE de las JONS programme had left no doubt in this respect. The Falangists claimed 'a pre-eminent place in Europe', moving from the conviction that Spain would have recovered its prestige precisely in the European dimension.⁷⁰ According to them, the absence of a European vision was the cause of the decline of the fatherland. Drawing once again from Ortega y Gasset's thought, National Syndicalists believed that the 'disease' afflicting the country was the result of Spain's 'distancing from Europe', a continent which, for its part, had shown its civilising capacity to the world for centuries.⁷¹ As Ortega y Gasset had suggested in 1910, the 'regeneration' of the nation had to proceed in parallel with its 'Europeanisation' since, if the former constituted 'the desire', the latter represented 'the means of satisfying it'.⁷² Ultimately, 'Spain was the problem and Europe the solution'.⁷³ This is why the *camisas azules* strongly emphasised their participation in the new Nazi continental order, in which they wanted a position of command. For them, Europe was the 'international field of the new Spanish action' while the Falange was the 'army of a new order' that Madrid had to 'communicate to Europe and to the world'.⁷⁴ The Spanish people, as 'the most European of all peoples', would finally regain the guiding function that it deserved 'for its history and importance'.⁷⁵ Thus, Antonio Tovar, addressing the party's Sección Femenina in Barcelona in September 1939, declared:

It appears that a new order is taking shape [...] based on the principle that there are people made to rule and people made to obey. We, the Spaniards, are people made to rule; our history teaches us this. Therefore, our duty is to enhance our history now, update it and mobilise it aggressively, with offensive style and direct action. It is only in this way that Spain will become one of the [...] great units – as José Antonio sensed – called to govern the world in this century when all fiction of freedom [...] will disappear.⁷⁶

The reference to the founder of the Spanish Falange, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, is significant because it was he who first pointed out the role that Spain would assume on the world stage. In 1934, he stressed that the 'democratic idea offered by the League of Nations' was 'already decaying internationally'.⁷⁷ The world was tending 'again to be directed by three or four racial entities', and Spain could be one of them.⁷⁸ Bearing this in mind, the Falangists claimed a prominent position in the future continental fascist organisation. They were sure they fully deserved it by virtue of their 'fundamental contribution' to the imminent Nazi-Fascist victory which, they affirmed, 'began to take shape in Europe on the same day that [Francoist] Spain's victory became a reality in the Spanish battlefields'.⁷⁹

If both the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts coincided in demanding a central role for their states in the New Order, at the same time, they would have contributed to its realisation in their own peculiar way. PNF ideologues stressed the Italian spiritual and cultural superiority as an essential element for its creation. In a clear allusion to German power politics, they rejected an exclusive focus on force and the 'barbaric need for domination'.⁸⁰ They wanted to regenerate Europe through the diffusion of the 'universal principles of the Fascist doctrine' and the spread of the Fascist 'spiritual unit'.⁸¹ They wished to pour their 'faith', their 'moral imperative' and the 'profound humanity of [their] totalitarian conception of the state' into other peoples.⁸² Thus, they proclaimed fascism as 'the lowest common denominator of the European West', 'today's reality' and 'tomorrow's hope', and saw 'European fascism' as the 'only remedy to the chaos that threaten[ed] the foundations of the western civilisation'.⁸³ After all, according to party theorists, Italian Fascism had played a leading role in developing an alternative political system to those prevailing in contemporary civilisation. As Berto Ricci affirmed, it was an 'Italian revolution that became universal'.⁸⁴ The same conviction is found in the reflections of Giuseppe Bottai, who wrote:

The disposition of the Italians to think, build and act on the basis of universality, already exalted in Roman times when the *Urbe* implemented the *jus gentium*, has returned to be fruitful with Fascism. Keep in mind the Fascist concept of the state and its implementation, the economic and social programme of Fascism, its corporative institutes, the Fascist evolution of law, the Fascist concept of youth education; in short, the Fascist concept of life and the experience of the last twenty years. You will acknowledge not

only the renewal of Italy and its enormous progress on the path of civilisation, but also that these principles, the institutes, these goals, these real facts have determined [...] the renewal [...] of many nations in Europe, and not only in Europe.⁸⁵

This did not mean transplanting Fascism *en bloc* into different contexts. As PNF ideologues highlighted, the Fascist revolution had taken place in Italy with ‘methods and institutes strictly adhering to the needs of the Italian nation’, which were therefore not reproducible in their entirety.⁸⁶ However, as the Blackshirts stressed, these methods and institutes rested on a doctrine that posed ‘universal political, economic and ethical problems’ and was itself universal in its significance.⁸⁷ Consequently, it could expand rapidly across borders, finding ‘the ground abroad already prepared by a vibrant atmosphere of recognition and admiration’.⁸⁸

Mussolini himself brought into focus the theme of the relationship between the Fascist doctrine and Europe. He was convinced that ‘every nation [would have] “its” fascism’ soon, namely ‘a fascism adapted to the peculiar situation of that particular people’.⁸⁹ For him, there would never be a fascism ‘to be exported in standardised forms’ but a ‘complex of doctrines, methods, experiences, achievements which gradually invest[ed] in and penetrate[d] into all states of the European community, and represent[ed] the “new” fact in the history of human civilisation’.⁹⁰ In summary, as Bottai emphasised, ‘the universality of Fascism had set itself beyond [the Italian] boundary’.⁹¹ It was a matter of ‘founding a fascist system’ in every state ‘according to the spirit of each nation, almost evoking it from each national tradition’.⁹² The history of Italian Fascism had become ‘an essential moment in European history’ and in the history of all humanity.⁹³ As a consequence, the Europe of tomorrow would have inevitably been fascist ‘in the logical development of events’.⁹⁴ The Old Continent would survive the crisis it was experiencing only by taking inspiration from the ‘Italy of Littorio’, which would assume ‘the new social sense, the tone of life, [and] the moral secret of discipline and harmony’.⁹⁵

Based on this perspective, the regions under the control of Rome—organised hierarchically according to the degree of social evolution and the productive capacity of each people—would adopt the values of Fascist Italy. For Bottai, among these were the primacy of politics over the economy, the state direction of the economy and the subordination of

individual interests to the collective good. The ‘recognition of private initiative, its elevation to a public function’ and ‘interclass collaboration for the social order, welfare and a higher productive level’ completed the picture.⁹⁶ Fascism had already developed and implemented these cornerstones of its doctrine within Italy’s borders. From then on, its mission was to transmit them to the associated entities within the Fascist imperial community, which Mussolini planned to extend throughout the Mediterranean basin and beyond. The Fascist imperial community was to include, first, Nice, Corsica, Malta, the Dalmatian Coast, the Ionian Islands, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece and Cyprus. Then it should incorporate most of the eastern Mediterranean countries. Among these were Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Jordan but also Iraq, Arabia and Yemen, which would create a bridge between the European, African and Asian continents under the aegis of the Littorio.⁹⁷ Finally, the Fascist imperial community would comprise the colonies of the Maghreb and Italian Eastern Africa, which would have second-tier political status due to the alleged racial inferiority of their native inhabitants.⁹⁸

For their part, the Falangist perspectives were no less ambitious and specific. According to National Syndicalist theorists, Spain’s unique contribution to the *Neuordnung Europas* would be to spread the universal principles of the Hispanidad. The immediate reference was to two crucial and interconnected aspects of the Spanish essence, namely imperial and traditional Catholic values, which the Blueshirts emphasised more than ever in view of the realisation of the new continental order envisaged by Hitler and Mussolini.⁹⁹ On the one hand, Falangists were convinced that Spain would act as the outpost of Nazi-Fascist Europe in Latin America.¹⁰⁰ In light of the bond they believed still existed between their country and its former colonies, they intended to free those territories from North American interference, linking their fate once again to the Spanish fate and, indirectly, to the fate of the Axis. As the law establishing the Consejo de la Hispanidad in 1940 stated, Spain would become ‘the faithful representation of this [Nazi-Fascist] Europe, leader of the world’ in South America.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the National Syndicalists presented themselves and their nation as the bridge between the two continents, wishing to assume the role of guarantors of the political, social and economic values of the new post-war European order beyond the Atlantic Ocean soon.¹⁰²

On the other hand, the Falangists were confident that Spain would operate as the link between Nazism and the Christian-Catholic tradition

for the continental spiritual rebirth. In particular, some National Syndicalist intellectuals, inspired by Giménez Caballero's considerations about the possibility of conciliating fascist ideals and Catholic precepts, identified in Christianity 'the only way to recover the unity of the continent, [which was] compatible with a German victory'.¹⁰³ Pedro Laín Entralgo pointed out that 'without Christianity, there [was] no Europe' and it was the historical task of Spain to provide for its diffusion.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, an editorial in *Arriba* saw in Spain the future initiator of the 'new Catholic order of the world'.¹⁰⁵ As highlighted previously, Spanish fascism was not a confessional movement and, at least until the early 1940s, it maintained a totalitarian vocation. Nonetheless, especially after the unification of 1937 and the Civil War, the Catholic element in the Blueshirts' discourse undoubtedly increased. For some Falangist ideologues, it was a distinctiveness of the Spanish fascist identity and a badge of honour that allowed them to reiterate their specificity compared with other contemporary fascist experiences. This made the participation of Spain fundamental and irreplaceable in the eyes of National Syndicalist theorists, who were sure that they would earn a prestigious role as 'founders' of the new 'European era' alongside Italy and Germany.¹⁰⁶

In light of the above, a reflection on the revolutionary scope of the Fascist and Falangist plans for the *Neuordnung Europas* is needed. What emerges in the first place is the all-encompassing nature of these projects, which concerned not only geopolitical and economic dimensions but also the cultural sphere. A recent study by Benjamin Martin offers interesting insights in this regard. When analysing Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, Martin emphasises that, in the interwar period, these countries 'redefined ideological attitudes about what "European culture" was or should be', as this was crucial for realising any projects of dominion in the continent.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, both countries were aware of the importance of 'soft power' as a critical tool for acquiring consensus and imposing their 'model of modernity' abroad.¹⁰⁸ Such considerations also apply well to Spain. This is particularly true in view of the fact that, after the Civil War, the country could do nothing but aspire to a cultural function in the New European Order as it lacked the resources to impose itself internationally by force of arms. Putting aside any initial enthusiasm, Mussolini came to the same conclusion for his nation, as the failure of the 'lightning war' and dependence on his Nazi ally on the battlefield had prevented Italy from imposing itself as a world military superpower. In the face of overwhelming German supremacy, the Fascists and the Falangists aimed

to distinguish themselves as the heralds of universal and peculiar values inherent in the culture and history of their own movements. According to PNF and Falange theorists, this was their strength, which would allow them to make a difference in the future continental organisation.

It is precisely in the culture and ideology of Fascism and Falangism that the foundations of their Europeanism lay. In particular, two shared understandings created the basis for the plans of the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* for the *Neuordnung Europas*. The first was an absolute aversion to Bolshevism, socialism and liberal democracy. By the end of the 1930s, both Fascists and Falangists were denouncing with unprecedented determination both the 'anti-systemic' proletarian revolution and Russian imperialism, and the 'agnostic liberalism', 'destructive classism' and 'immoral capitalism' of the English and French matrix.¹⁰⁹ According to them, these were not only the causes of national decay, but also the evils that were weakening Europe. Thus, for the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts, the battle for the New European Order appeared nothing more than the continuation of the struggle that they had fought against Bolshevism, socialism and liberal democracy within their respective countries. The PNF and the Falange had defeated these enemies internally. At that point, their renewed mission was to annihilate them internationally.

The second shared element at the basis of Fascist and Falangist Europeanism was the ultra-nationalist foundation of the two movements and its natural evolution in an imperialist sense. The exaltation of the nation and the constant need to broaden its boundaries were two crucial and interconnected elements in the ideological universes of the PNF and the Falange. Recreating the Italian and the Spanish empires was the only way to save their nations from the challenges that modernity had brought upon them, and Europe was a beacon of hope in this context. For the *camicie nere*, the New Order was the route to making Fascist nationalism 'enter the resolute phase of imperialism' and to continuing to mobilise the Italian population towards ever more ambitious purposes.¹¹⁰ Similarly, for the *camisas azules*, it represented the means to fulfil Spain's *destino el lo universal* and to finally recover its imperial essence.¹¹¹ Therefore, the Italian and the Spanish fascists embraced the cause of the New European Order joyfully, since it had to look like an exceptional opportunity for them to satisfy their ultra-nationalist and expansionist goals.¹¹²

These considerations make it possible to highlight interconnections not only between Italian Fascism and Spanish Falangism but also, more generally, within the Axis front. Thus, it emerges that Fascism and Falangism

shared the same ‘cultural revisionism’ that Benjamin Martin identifies as the bedrock upon which Berlin and Rome created their partnership.¹¹³ The anti-communist, anti-liberal and anti-democratic precondition was a common ideological and cultural feature between the three fascisms. They wanted to build not only a new political and economic order, but also a cultural one. Indeed, they were aware that the battle for the future continental hegemony would be waged also through a cultural revolution that would overturn the cultural system imposed in Versailles in 1919. Ultimately, National Socialism, Fascism and Falangism aimed at replacing what they considered subversive and divisive ideas of European civilisation, and giving the Old Continent a brand-new fascist look.¹¹⁴

Imperialism constituted another lowest common denominator of these three national manifestations of the fascist phenomenon. The ‘imperial nexus’, namely the alliance between empires that according to Daniel Hedinger existed between Italy, Germany and Japan during the Second World War, can also be extended to include Spain.¹¹⁵ The tripartite imperium that the Falangists dreamed of creating alongside Italy and Germany can be interpreted not just as a pact among states but as a ‘trans-imperial cooperation’ that gave ideological cohesion to their partnership.¹¹⁶ Certainly, at that time, the solid reality of the German Reich was very different from both the shaky Italian empire and the potential Spanish empire that was to be rebuilt from the ground up. Nevertheless, undoubtedly imperialism constituted a powerful layer of glue within the Nazi–Fascist front, testifying once again to the strong cross-national cultural and ideological connections among its members.

Despite their expectations, the Fascist and Falangist projects of a strong Italian and Spanish presence in the New European Order came to an end with the change of national and international conjunctures. In Spain, it happened in the late summer of 1942 when Franco decisively silenced the most authentic fascist component within his government and replaced it with National Catholic political culture. This helped the Caudillo to distance himself from the Axis once the fate of the war turned against the Nazi–Fascist dictatorships, and allowed Spain to survive in a post-war order ruled by the Allied powers. In Italy, the internal debate on the New Order changed progressively at the beginning of 1943. The multiple Italian military failures and the beginning of the German retreat caused PNF leaders and theorists to abandon the project of a Europe founded on Italian spiritual primacy and dominated by imperial Nazi–Fascist powers. In its place, the creation of a ‘Europe of the nations’ was envisioned,

in which—as the Undersecretary of State at Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Bastianini, stressed—the position of minor states was re-evaluated and their national individualities preserved and defended.¹¹⁷ Geopolitical and economic perspectives were set aside, and Fascist discourse on the New European Order was articulated in diplomatic terms to distance Italy from Germany with a defensive aim.¹¹⁸ However, these efforts were in vain. The collapse of Mussolini's regime and the total subordination of the Fascist Republic of Salò to the Third Reich definitively wiped out Italy's aspirations for Europe.

NOTES

1. On the concept of New European Order and the reconstruction of the related historiographical debate, see Paolo Fonzi, 'Il Nuovo Ordine Europeo nazionalsocialista. Storia e storiografia,' in *1943. Strategie militari, collaborazionisti, resistenze*, eds. Monica Fioravanzo and Carlo Fumian (Roma: Viella, 2015), 101–119.
2. Michael Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2003), 130, 480–481; Enzo Collotti, 'Prefazione,' in *La moneta nel grande spazio. La pianificazione nazionalsocialista dell'integrazione monetaria europea 1939–1945*, ed. Paolo Fonzi (Milano: Unicopli, 2011), I–III; Rafael García Pérez, 'El proyecto continental del Tercer Reich,' *Revista de estudios políticos* 87 (1995): 259–267; Rafael García Pérez, 'La idea de la 'Nueva Europa' en el pensamiento nacionalista español de la inmediata postguerra,' *Revista del Centro de Estudios Constitucionales* 5 (January–March 1990): 204–216. On the concept of 'living space' or 'great space' and the related debate, see Paolo Fonzi, 'Nazionalismo e Nuovo Ordine Europeo. La discussione sulla Großraumwirtschaft,' *Studi Storici* 2 (2004): 313–366.
3. Mark Mazower, *Hitler's empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 3.
4. Ibidem, 7.
5. Enzo Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)* (Firenze: Giunti, 2002), 69.
6. Ibidem, 69. See also Burleigh, *Il terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 479.
7. Mazower, *Hitler's empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe*, 121–126, 259–318. See also Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 477–478; Yves Durand, *Il nuovo ordine europeo. La collaborazione nell'Europa tedesca (1938–1945)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 80–85; Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)*, 48–49; García Pérez, 'El proyecto continental del Tercer Reich,' 267–271,

- 274–282; Fonzi, *La moneta nel grande spazio. La pianificazione nazional-socialista dell'integrazione monetaria europea 1939–1945*, 157–179, 213–278, 437–446; Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's foreign workers: Enforced foreign labor in Germany under the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael T. Allen, *Hitler's slave lords: The business of forced labour in occupied Europe* (London: Tempus, 2004).
8. For an in-depth analysis of the topic, see Hannsjoachim W. Koch, *In the name of the Volk: Political justice in Hitler's Germany* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997). Cf. Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 484–488. Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)*, 43–45, 70–72, 99–101.
 9. Mazower, *Hitler's empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe*, 368–415. On Göring's order to Heydrich and the formalisation of the 'final solution' at the Wannsee Conference of 20 January 1942, see Kurt Pätzold and Erika Schwarz, *Ordine del giorno: sterminio degli ebrei. La conferenza del Wannsee del 20 gennaio 1942* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2000), 24–59; Raul Hilberg, *The destruction of the European Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 438–444; Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 693, 711–712. Regarding the vast literature on the 'final solution' see, among others, Saul Friedländer, *The years of extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007); Jeffrey Herf, 'The Jewish war: Goebbels and the anti-semitic campaigns of the Nazi propaganda ministry,' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 19 (2005): 51–80; Neil Gregor (ed.), *Nazism, war and genocide: Essays in honour of Jeremy Noakes* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005); Gotz Aly, *'The final solution': Nazi population policy and the murder of the European Jews* (London: Hodder Arnold, 1999); Christopher Browning, *Nazi policy, Jewish workers, German killers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Christopher Browning, 'A final Hitler decision for the "final solution"? The Riegner telegram reconsidered,' *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 10 (1999): 3–10; Christopher Browning, *The path to genocide: Essays on launching the final solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Hannah Arendt, *The origins of totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951).
 10. Mazower, *Hitler's empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe*, 102–113. On German occupation in France see Julian Jackson, *The fall of France: The Nazi invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Julian Jackson, *France: The dark years 1940–1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Robert Paxton, *Vichy 1940–1944. Il regime del disonore* (Milano: Net, 2002).
 11. On the topic see, among others, Christian Hartmann, *Operation Barbarossa: Nazi Germany's war in the East, 1941–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Maria Teresa Giusti, *La campagna di*

- Russia 1941–1943* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016); David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's defeat in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Alex J. Kay, *Exploitation, resettlement, mass murder: Political and economic planning for German occupation policy in the Soviet Union, 1940–1941* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Ben Sheperd, *War in the wild East: The German army and the Soviet partisans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Juergen Foerster, 'The German army and the ideological war against the Soviet Union,' in *Policies of genocide: Jews and Soviet prisoners of war in Nazi Germany*, ed. Gerhart Hirschfeld (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986).
12. On *Generalplan Ost* see Burleigh, *Il terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 481–540. Cf. Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)*, 60; Fonzi, *Il nuovo ordine europeo nazionalsocialista. Storia e storiografia*, 144.
 13. Mazower, *Hitler's empire: How the Nazis ruled Europe*, 137–178. See also Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 481.
 14. Burleigh, *Il Terzo Reich. Una nuova storia*, 481.
 15. For a detailed analysis, see Gustavo Corni, *Il sogno del 'grande spazio.' Le politiche d'occupazione nell'Europa nazista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2005). Cf. Martin Blinkhorn, *Fascism and the right in Europe 1919–1945* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 88–93; Durand, *Il nuovo ordine europeo. La collaborazione nell'Europa tedesca (1938–1945)*, 52–72.
 16. Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, ed. Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1990), 416.
 17. Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, 418. See also Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), 697.
 18. Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, 418.
 19. 'Popolo italiano! Corri alle armi,' in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, eds. Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel (Firenze: La Fenice, 1951–1963), vol. XXIX, 403; Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, 416.
 20. Dino Grandi's quote is in Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato. I. L'Italia in guerra 1940–1943. 1. Dalla guerra 'breve' alla guerra lunga* (Torino: Einaudi, 1990), 94.
 21. Ibidem.
 22. Ubaldo Soddu, *Memorie e riflessioni di un generale (1933–1941)*, unpublished (1948), 59.
 23. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. II. Lo Stato totalitario (1936–1940)*, 309.
 24. 'Alla vecchia guardia,' in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIX, 251.
 25. Among several initiatives, Franco regime sent Spanish workers to the Reich, sheltered German submarines in Spanish ports, and allowed German reconnaissance planes to fly safely using Spanish marks. At the time, these initiatives appeared as the first significant steps that preluded

- the complete alignment of Madrid with the Axis, and the official entry of Spain into the war. The Spanish occupation of the Tangier international area, just two days after the declaration of non-belligerence on 12 June, seems to be a further clue. On the topic, see Paul Preston, *Franco* (London: Fontana Press, 1995), 360–361. See also Norman J. W. Goda, ‘The reluctant belligerent: Franco’s Spain and Hitler’s war,’ in *The lion and the eagle: Interdisciplinary essays on German-Spanish relations over the centuries*, eds. Conrad Kent, Thomas K. Wolber, and Cameron M. K. Hewitt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 383–396.
26. ‘Lo que no es nuestra neutralidad,’ *Arriba* 374 (12 June 1940): 1.
 27. Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *¿Fascismo en España?* [I ed. 1935], in Ledesma Ramos, *Obras completas*, vol. IV, 161. See also Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, ‘La inminencia de un nuevo orden europeo,’ *La Patria Libre* 6 (23 March 1935): 4.
 28. *Ibidem*, 161.
 29. Antonio Asensio, ‘Hacia la nueva Europa,’ *Pueblo* 84 (21 September 1940): 1. See also ‘Antes unas palabras históricas,’ *Arriba* 457 (17 September 1940): 1.
 30. Arnd Bauerkämper, ‘Transnational fascism: Cross-border relations between regimes and movements in Europe, 1922–1939,’ *East Central Europe* 2–3 (2010): 230.
 31. ‘Presencia de España,’ *Pueblo* 79 (16 September 1940): 1. See also Xavier de Echarri, ‘Presencia en el mundo,’ *Vértice* 39 (December 1940).
 32. *Ibidem*, 1.
 33. Ledesma Ramos, *¿Fascismo en España?* 161.
 34. José Antonio Maravall, ‘Europa o antiEuropa. I. La política exterior, como necesidad interna,’ *Arriba* 105 (1 August 1939): 3. See also ‘La segunda gran batalla en Europa,’ *Vértice* 32 (May 1940); ‘Ante la guerra,’ *Escorial* 4 (February 1941): 159–164.
 35. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, ‘La idea de Europa en la cultura franquista 1939–1962,’ *Hispania* 199 (1998): 684–685. See also Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), 161.
 36. Angeles Egidio León, ‘Franco y las potencias del Eje. La tentación intervencionista de España en la segunda guerra mundial,’ *Historia contemporánea* 2 (1989): 191–201. See also Wayne H. Bowen, *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the new order* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 2–3.
 37. Preston, *Franco*, 325. At that time, Spain’s diplomatic approach to Germany and Italy was visible in the strengthening of cultural exchanges between the three countries. Two interesting examples are the creation of the Hispanic-German Association in 1941, which collaborated with

- the Department of Culture of the German Embassy, and the Italian-Spanish School in Madrid founded in June 1940. In that period, cultural interchanges of professors, researchers and students also took place. Italian and German press and cinematography likewise spread through Spain, and vice versa. Hispanic-German musical events were created, and Italian concert companies played in Spanish theatres. As early as 1937, exchange programmes between the youth and female associations of the Falange became rather frequent with the homologous associations of National Socialist and Fascist parties. See, among others, Toni Morant i Ariño, 'Spanish fascist women's transnational relations during the Second World War,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 4 (2019): 834–857; Johannes Dalfinger and Dieter Pohl (eds.), *A new nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and transnational networks in the national socialist sphere of influence, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2018); Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (eds.), *Fascism without borders: Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017); Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational fascism in the twentieth century: Spain, Italy and the global neo-fascist network* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Marició Janué i Miret, 'Relaciones culturales en el 'Nuevo orden': la Alemania nazi y la España de Franco,' *Hispania* 251 (September–December 2015): 805–832; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo, 193–210*.
38. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 162. See also Antonio Marquina Barrio, 'España y las alianzas durante el período ministerial de Ramón Serrano Suñer,' in *El impacto de la II guerra mundial en Europa y en España* ed. Ramón Espinar Gallego (Madrid: Asamblea de Madrid, Gabinete de la Presidencia, 1986), 35–51.
 39. Payne, *The Franco regime 1936–1975*, 270–273. The quote is on page 273.
 40. Although there was no Italian participation in Hendaye, Hitler and Ribbentrop had previously informed Mussolini and Ciano about the issue of Spain's entry into the war and the demands of Madrid. During the meeting in Berlin with the Fascist foreign minister on 28 September and the interviews with the Duce at the Brenner on 4 October, the Führer expressed his doubts about a possible Spanish intervention, which seemed to create more problems than advantages. On 1 October 1940, Ciano and Mussolini discussed the entry of Spain into the conflict

- directly with Serrano Súñer in Rome. Nonetheless, they did not examine the practical aspects of the matter. Cf. Preston, *Franco*, 386–387. On the topic see also Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943*, 468–469.
41. Durand, *Il nuovo ordine europeo. La collaborazione nell'Europa tedesca (1938–1945)*, 69; Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)*, 97–98.
 42. On negotiations between Spain and Germany and the conditions that Franco's government presented to the Reich, see Preston, *Franco*, 377–379, 388–399; Paul Preston, 'Franco and Hitler: The myth of Hendaye 1940,' *Contemporary European History* 1 (March 1992): 1–16; Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco regime 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 270–273; Javier Tusell and Genoveva García Queipo de Llano, *Franco y Mussolini* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985), 115; Gustau Nerín and Alfred Bosch, *El imperio que nunca existió. La aventura colonial discutida en Hendaya* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés Editores, 2001), 26–38, 66–72, 135–146; Durand, *Il nuovo ordine europeo. La collaborazione nell'Europa tedesca (1938–1945)*, 69; Collotti, *L'Europa nazista. Il progetto di un nuovo ordine europeo (1939–1945)*, 97–98; De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato. I. L'Italia in guerra 1940–1943*, 1. *Dalla guerra 'breve' alla guerra lunga*, 179–182. See also Ramón Serrano Súñer, *Entre Hendaya y Gibraltar* (Madrid: Publicaciones Españolas, 1947), 169–170; 'España, Africa y Sureste europeo, tema dominante,' *Pueblo* 84 (21 September 1940): 1.
 43. Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, *Camarada invierno. Experiencia y memoria de la División Azul (1941–1945)* (Madrid: Crítica, 2016), 59–69.
 44. Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 166.
 45. Ibidem.
 46. Ibidem.
 47. 'Hechos de la Falange,' *Escorial* 10 (August 1941): 281.
 48. Ismael Saz Campos, *Las caras del fascismo* (Granada: Editorial Comares, 2013), 62. Cf. 'Hechos de la Falange en tierra de Rusia,' *Escorial* 12 (October 1941): 113–115.
 49. Monica Fioravanzo, 'Italian Fascism from a transnational perspective: The debate on the New European Order (1930–1945),' in *Fascism without borders. Transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, eds. Arndt Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 245.
 50. 'La solidarietà operante fra Italia e Germania esaltata dai due Condottieri,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 270 (28 September 1937): 1.

51. Salvatore Villari, 'Principi giuridici del nuovo ordine,' *Critica fascista* 4 (15 December 1941): 51; Giovanni Selvi, 'Uno il nemico, una la guerra, una la pace,' *Gerarchia* 11 (November 1940): 566; Bruno Masotti, 'Imperi dello spirito,' *Libro e Moschetto* 35 (29 April 1941): 2. See also Gianni Guizzardi, 'Idee di costruzione,' *Critica fascista* 4 (15 December 1941): 53–54; Camillo Pellizzi, 'Italia e Germania. Problemi del Nuovo Ordine,' *Civiltà fascista* 1–2 (November–December 1941): 26–31; 'Verso la nuova Europa,' *Libro e Moschetto* 1 (13 September 1941): 1; 'La guerra fascista,' *Civiltà fascista* 6 (June 1940): 367–371; Giovanni Engely, 'L'Europa nuova,' *Critica fascista* 23 (1 October 1937): 394–395.
52. Masotti, 'Imperi dello spirito,' 2.
53. Paolo Orano, *Verso un nuovo ordine mondiale* (Milano: Mondadori, 1940), 22.
54. Ibidem.
55. 'La solidarietà operante fra Italia e Germania esaltata dai due Condottieri,' 1.
56. Ibidem.
57. Orano, *Verso un nuovo ordine mondiale*, 22. See also Guido Cavallucci, 'Imperialismi antieuropei e idea imperiale fascista,' *Critica fascista* 3 (1 December 1936): 35–37; Giovanni Engely, 'La volontà europea dell'Italia imperiale,' *Critica fascista* 10 (15 March 1937): 158–159; Renato Famea, 'Destini dell'Italia e dell'Europa,' *Gerarchia* 11 (November 1939): 724–732.
58. Salvatore Villari, 'Principi giuridici per il nuovo ordine,' 51. Cf. Andrea Perrone, 'Mare nostrum e "Geopolitica". Il mito imperiale dei geografi italiani,' *Diacronie* 25 (2016): 7–9.
59. Villari, 'Principi giuridici per il nuovo ordine,' 52. On the topic see also Davide Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940–1943)* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003), 74.
60. Villari, 'Principi giuridici per il nuovo ordine,' 52. See also Nicola Balistreri, 'Nuova Europa,' *Vincere. Passo Romano* 15 (25 May 1941): 2.
61. Villari, 'Principi giuridici per il nuovo ordine,' 52.
62. Alfio Titta, 'Concetto di "spazio vitale",' *Gerarchia* 12 (December 1941): 646–648.
63. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940–1943)*, 78.
64. Guizzardi, 'Idee in costruzione,' 53. See also Giuseppe Bottai, 'Contributo dell'Italia fascista al "Nuovo Ordine",' *Civiltà fascista* 1–2 (November–December 1941): 10; Giorgio Chiesura Corona, 'La guerra

- come strumento di rinnovazione delle gerarchie tra i popoli,' *Gerarchia* 5 (May 1941): 273–277.
65. 'Importante discurso del jefe de Prensa del Reich,' *Pueblo* 48 (10 August 1940): 1. See also 'Llamamiento, advertencia y consigna de José Antonio,' *Escorial* 6 (April 1941): 5–12.
 66. José Antonio Maravall, 'De nuevo, Europa,' *Arriba* 457 (17 September 1940): 3; Saz Campos, *Las caras del franquismo*, 61; 'La lucha de Europa,' *Arriba* 301 (16 March 1940): 1.
 67. Maravall, 'De nuevo, Europa,' 3.
 68. Ibidem.
 69. Ibidem.
 70. 'Puntos programáticos de la Falange Española de las JONS' (November 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, ed. Agustín del Río Cisneros (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1976), 478.
 71. José Ortega y Gasset, 'Competencia,' in *Obras completas*, José Ortega y Gasset (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1969), vol. X, 228.
 72. José Ortega y Gasset, 'La pedagogía social como programa político' (12 March 1910), in *Discursos políticos*, José Ortega y Gasset (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1990), 62. On this topic see Saz Campos, *Las caras del franquismo*, 53–59; Jesús J. Sebastian Lorente, 'La idea de Europa en el pensamiento político de Ortega y Gasset,' *Revista de estudios políticos* 83 (January–March 1994): 221–245; Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus, 2015), 144–146.
 73. Ortega y Gasset, 'La pedagogía social como programa político,' 62.
 74. José Antonio Maravall, 'Europa o antiEuropa. II. La cuestión europea de España,' *Arriba* 106 (2 August 1939): 3.
 75. José Antonio Maravall, 'Europa o antiEuropa. III. El sentido español de lo europeo,' *Arriba* 107 (3 August 1939): 3; García Díaz, 'El puesto de España,' *Pueblo* 84 (21 September 1940): 1. See also 'España, vanguardia de la nueva Europa,' *Pueblo* 437 (29 November 1941): 1; 'España tendrá un puesto en el mundo,' *Pueblo* 210 (15 February 1941): 1.
 76. Antonio Tovar, *El imperio de España* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1941), 106–107 [I ed. 1936].
 77. 'Declaraciones en "Ahora"' (16 February 1934), in *José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Obras completas. Escritos y discursos (1922–1936). Tomo I*, 306.
 78. Ibidem.
 79. 'Presencia de España,' 1.

80. Giovanni Selvi, 'Fermentazione fascista nel mondo,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1935): 570. See also Fioravanzo, 'Italian Fascism from a transnational perspective: The debate on the New European Order (1930–1945),' 252.
81. Giuseppe Sperduti, 'La rinascita europea,' *Civiltà Fascista* 12 (December 1934): 1121.
82. Ibidem.
83. Mario Palazzi, 'Fascismo europeo,' *Critica fascista* 4 (15 February 1934): 79–80.
84. Berto Ricci, 'Mente fascista e risorgimento italiano,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1934): 578. See also Mirko Ardemagni, 'La rivoluzione fascista salverà la razza bianca,' *Gerarchia* 8 (August 1935): 673–677; Federico Maria Paces, 'La terza alternativa,' *Critica fascista* 2 (15 November 1936): 17–19; Guido De Luca, 'L'Europa che nasce,' *Critica fascista* 2 (15 November 1940): 21–22.
85. Bottai, 'Contributo dell'Italia fascista al "Nuovo Ordine",' 15.
86. Sperduti, 'La rinascita europea,' 1122.
87. Ibidem.
88. Ibidem.
89. Benito Mussolini, 'Europa e Fascismo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 278 (6 October 1937): 1.
90. Ibidem, 1. See also Giuseppe Volpi, 'Fascismo,' in *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, ed. Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana (Milano: Treccani, 1934), vol. XIV, 878; Vincenzo Buonassisi, 'Il Partito e l'internazionale fascista,' *Critica fascista* 9 (1 March 1938): 140–142; Michele Romano, 'La funzione dell'Italia nell'equilibrio europeo,' *Civiltà fascista* 7 (July 1936): 428; Quirita, 'Sostanza e forme,' *Gerarchia* 8 (August 1934): 635–636; Gaetano Napolitano, 'Verso una gerarchia internazionale fascista,' *Critica fascista* 16 (15 August 1933): 308–309.
91. Bottai, 'Contributo dell'Italia fascista al "Nuovo Ordine",' 15.
92. Giuseppe Bottai, 'Domani una realtà europea,' *Critica fascista* 7 (1 April 1933): 122.
93. Maurizio Maraviglia, 'Nazionalità e universalità del Fascismo,' in *Dottina e politica fascista*, ed. Facoltà Fascista di Scienze Politiche, (Perugia: La Nuova Italia, 1930), 216–217. See also Fantasio Piccoli, 'La Nazione e l'ordine nuovo,' *Gerarchia* 7 (July 1942): 281–285. On the topic see Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel XX secolo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), 208–211 [1 ed. 1997].
94. 'Il Duce e il Führer parlano alla Germania e al mondo,' *Il Popolo d'Italia* 271 (29 September 1937): 1.
95. Benito Mussolini, *La politica estera*, ed. Paolo Orano (Roma: Casa Editrice Pinciana, 1937), 10–11. See also 'La universalità del Fascismo,'

- Il Popolo d'Italia* 256 (28 October 1930): 2. Many intellectuals dealt with this topic since 1933. In this regard, see Sergio De Cesare, 'Il Fascismo e l'unità europea,' *Critica fascista* 1 (1 January 1933): 4–6; Giuseppe Bevione, 'Undici anni di politica estera di Mussolini,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1933): 815–823; Balbino Giuliano, 'La coerenza storica del fascismo,' *Gerarchia* 10 (October 1933): 797–808; Salvatore Valitutti, 'Funzione europea dell'Italia,' *Civiltà fascista* 8 (August 1936): 516–518; Edgardo Sulis, 'La missione di Mussolini,' *Gerarchia* 11 (November 1938): 741–744.
96. Bottai, 'Contributo dell'Italia fascista al "Nuovo Ordine",' 9. See also 'Ordine nuovo,' *Libro e Moschetto* 4 (13 November 1941): 1; 'Economia e unità europea,' *Critica fascista* 2 (15 November 1941): 17–18; Selvi, 'Uno il nemico, una la guerra, una la pace,' 563–568.
 97. On the topic see De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato. I. L'Italia in guerra 1940–1943. 1. Dalla guerra 'breve' alla guerra lunga*, 233–242.
 98. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940–1943)*, 78–80. See also Durand, *Il nuovo ordine europeo. La collaborazione nell'Europa tedesca (1938–1945)*, 68.
 99. Marició Janué I Miret, 'Hispanidad in the völkisch "New Order" of Europe (1933–1945),' in *A new nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and transnational networks in the National Socialist sphere of influence, 1933–1945*, 99–101.
 100. Maravall, 'Europa o antiEuropa. III. El sentido español del lo europeo,' 3.
 101. Law of 2 November 1940, in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 312, 7 November 1940, 7649. Interesting insights into the Nazi plans for the transformation of Spain into a bridgehead to influence Latin America are in Mercedes Peñalba-Sotorrió, 'Beyond the war: Nazi propaganda aims in Spain during the Second World War,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (2019): 917–922.
 102. 'Misión americana de la juventud española,' *Destino* 116 (7 October 1939): 1; 'España y America,' *Destino* 137 (2 March 1940): 1.
 103. Ruiz Carnicer, 'La idea de Europa en la cultura franquista 1939–1962,' 684.
 104. Pedro Laín Entralgo, 'La cultura en el nuevo orden europeo,' *Escorial* 15 (January 1942): 9–10.
 105. 'España en su hora,' *Arriba* 424 (9 August 1940): 1.
 106. 'Los fundadores de una era europea,' *Arriba* 477 (10 October 1940): 1. On the topic, see Ismael Saz Campos, 'Discursos y proyectos españoles sobre el nuevo orden europeo,' in *Europa, 1939. El año de las catástrofes*, eds. Francesc Vilanova i Vila-Abadal and Pere Ysàs i Solades (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de Valencia, 2010), 139; Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo*, 170–171.

107. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*, 2.
108. Ibidem, 3.
109. Maravall, 'Europa o antiEuropa. II. La cuestión europea de España,' 3; 'La lucha de Europa,' 1. See also 'Nosotros ante la guerra,' *Escorial* 8 (June 1941): 325–331; Laín Entralgo, 'La cultura en el nuevo orden europeo,' 4.
110. Orano, *Verso un nuovo ordine mondiale*, 22.
111. 'España en su hora,' 1.
112. 'Lo que para nosotros es todo,' *Arriba* 587 (15 February 1941): 1.
113. Martin, *The Nazi-fascist new order for European culture*, 4.
114. Bauerkämper, 'Transnational fascism: Cross-border relations between regimes and movements in Europe, 1922–1939,' 214–246. See also Miguel Alonso Ibarra, 'Guerra Civil española y contrarrevolución. El fascismo europeo bajo el signo de la santa cruz,' *Ayer* 109 (2018): 276; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, 'Bolshevism as fantasy? Fear of revolution and counter-revolutionary violence, 1917–1923,' in *War in peace: Paramilitary violence in Europe after the Great War*, eds. Robert Gerwarth and John Horne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40–51.
115. Daniel Hedinger, 'The imperial nexus: The Second World War and the Axis in global perspective,' *Journal of Global History* 12 (2017): 185.
116. Ibidem.
117. Giuseppe Bastianini, 'Discorso del Sottosegretario di Stato agli Esteri Giuseppe Bastianini,' in *La politica estera italiana nella guerra e nella pace*, ed. Senato del Regno (Roma: Tipografia del Senato, 1943), 89–92. The quote is in Monica Fioravanzo, 'Idee e progetti italiani di nuovo ordine europeo nei rapporti col Reich nazista (1939–1943),' *Rivista Storica Italiana* CXXI, 1 (2009): 419.
118. Fioravanzo, 'Idee e progetti italiani di nuovo ordine europeo nei rapporti col Reich nazista (1939–1943),' 421.

CONCLUSIONS

The nation in the fascist phenomenon, understood generically, has often been analysed as a static concept, ignoring the fact that, in reality, it was a constantly evolving idea. The comparative study of fascist political culture in Italy and Spain perfectly highlights this dynamic, suggesting the need for an alternative approach to the examination of fascist nationalism, one that is more attentive to its transformations. This research has proposed a four-level interpretative scheme corresponding to four phases of the evolution of the idea of the nation, which are crucial inasmuch as they had significant repercussions on fascist political practices.

The first phase coincides with the foundation stage of the fascist nation, which PNF and Falange theorists defined and implemented within their state boundaries. The ideologues of the two parties formulated their concept of the nation moving from a complex re-elaboration of nationalist theories that arose throughout the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries. In so doing, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts shaped their idea of the fatherland, which had distinct pragmatic, revolutionary and anti-liberal characters hitherto lacking in nationalist thought. This process took place in the two countries at different times. In Italy, Fascist nationalism appeared in the aftermath of the First World War in response to the immobility of the old liberal ruling class, which proved unable to face the challenges that modernity was imposing on society. In Spain, Falangist nationalism manifested itself later, as the answer to the strong political and

social discontent that had overwhelmingly emerged following the end of Miguel Primo de Rivera's authoritarian regime and the beginning of the republican period.

Both Italian and Spanish fascists proclaimed themselves the legitimate heirs of the purest national tradition. The *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* were committed to completing the path that the *Risorgimento* had started and politically modernising the sacred ideal of the nation according to the precepts of PNF doctrine. For their part, the National Syndicalists were willing to recover the nation that had survived centuries of decline and reinvigorate it under the symbols of the yoke and arrows. Once the nation had been defined in ideological terms, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts attempted to make this ideal a reality. They engaged in a merciless struggle against alleged 'anti-national enemies' identified mainly as socialists, communists, liberal democrats and freemasons, thereby giving the Fascist and Falangist nations a clear exclusionary character. Full 'Italianness' and complete 'Spanishness' were only bestowed upon those who professed to be members of the Fascist and Falangist communities of destiny. By ideologising the national myth, Fascism and National Syndicalism eliminated the possibility of conceiving of it in any other way. As a consequence, they arbitrarily distinguished between those who were part of the nation and those who were not, basing their judgement on a purely political criterion.

The process of ideological appropriation of the nation also passed through the increasing presence of the PNF and the Falange within the state. The aim was, using a Mussolinian expression, to 'go toward the people'. Thus, they intervened in the care sector and the economic sector, in cultural and educational fields, in ludic and recreational activities, both directly and through dependent organisations. This strategy of irradiation of the two parties satisfied a double need. On the one hand, it was a way of shortening the distance between them and the Italian and Spanish populations; on the other hand, it cemented their respective national communities in light of the values of the Fascist and National Syndicalist revolutions.

Once the Fascist and Falangist idea of the nation became a reality on the domestic front, the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts began to project it beyond the geographical borders of Italy and Spain. The second stage of the evolution of the Fascist and Falangist idea of the nation corresponds to the imperial phase. For PNF and Falange theorists, the empire was the natural development of the nation and its legitimate dilatation in the

world. Inspired by the glorious Roman Empire and the Catholic Kings' overseas endeavours respectively, the Fascists and the National Syndicalists were determined to spread their principles abroad. However, they did not aspire to establish exclusively spiritual or cultural empires. On the contrary, they wanted real colonial dominion entailing the political and administrative reform of occupied territories according to Fascist and Falangist law.

Although the Italian and the Spanish fascists articulated the theme of empire in a very similar way, comparative analysis has highlighted two significant differences. First, in the Falangist ideological universe, the theme of empire had been central since its origins, unlike in Italy where, initially, Mussolini had only mentioned vague imperial aspirations on a few occasions. Conversely, from the very beginning, José Antonio Primo de Rivera's missional nationalism—summed up in the motto *unidad de destino en lo universal*—presupposed that the rebirth of the homeland would go hand in hand with a great outward expansionist project. Second, the Blackshirts' discourse on empire lacked the religious element that was present in Falangist thought. Despite Fascism and National Syndicalism both being non-confessional movements, the Blueshirts had to deal with the historic Catholic imprint that had characterised the entire process of nation and empire building in Spain since the end of the fifteenth century. In particular, religion played a fundamental role in the overseas feats of the colonisers, who conquered the New World by brandishing the sword in one hand and holding the cross in the other. This awareness justifies the references to Catholic tradition—to which the idea of the empire in Spain was historically anchored—in the Blueshirts' expansionist claims.

The imperial dimension of the homeland evoked the 'civilising people' concept that the PNF and the Falange linked to the concept of 'race'. The interpretation of the nation in a racial sense constitutes the third phase of the evolution of fascist nationalism, which, however, is not present in all fascist experiences, as evidenced by the case of Falangism. For the Blueshirts, the word 'race' did not indicate a biological reality, but was a synonym for nation and people. Falangist theorists employed it to signify the Hispanic community in general, without discrimination. The racial plurality that had characterised the nation and the empire since the glorious time of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of Castile made any ethnic distinction redundant. Furthermore, José Antonio's concept of unity of destiny in the universal identified the nation with a historic

mission to unite all Hispanic peoples, excluding physical or biological implications. The 'regeneration of race' was among the aims of National Syndicalism, as in all fascist revolutions. Nonetheless, this expression had a spiritual and moral meaning entailing the rejection of negative eugenic practices. Like racism, anti-Semitism was a marginal element in Falange ideology. Except for some party members close to certain clerical circles, National Syndicalists did not regard Jews as enemies. Anti-Semitic theories circulated within the Falange during the Civil War in consequence of Nazi propaganda in Spain. However, they referred almost exclusively to the anti-Francoist position of international Judaism, which supported the Popular Front at the time.

Until the mid-1930s, in most cases, neither did Italian Fascists embrace particular racial prejudice. The ultra-nationalist ideology of the Blackshirts was undoubtedly a harbinger of discriminatory behaviours and, in fact, some radical sectors of Fascism included those who sympathised with biological racism as early as the mid-1920s. Nevertheless, until halfway through the following decade, negative eugenics was distinctly criticised by the regime, which in turn, was more interested in the quantitative growth and physical well-being of the population than in issues of blood. The situation changed with the campaign in Ethiopia. Widespread promiscuity between colonisers and natives and the consequent increase in the number of mixed-race children made Fascist ideologues revise their stance. From that moment on, race, in its biological meaning, became a significant factor determining Fascist national identity. For the Blackshirts, the purity of Italian lineage was in jeopardy because of genetic mixing with allegedly inferior populations. Laws against racial promiscuity were promulgated, while scientists, demographers and jurists attempted to correlate these laws with previously adopted demographic measures in order to legitimise the new orientation of the regime. Party intellectuals tried to do the same with anti-Semitism, which had been absent in the history of unified Italy except as a historic remnant in certain Catholic circles. Jews living on the peninsula were few, well integrated and, in several cases, devoted to the PNF. As happened with racism, until the mid-1930s the party—except for a limited group of integralist Blackshirts—had no recognisably anti-Jewish features. These were introduced later as a result of the acceleration of the Fascist totalitarian project and political calculations pushing Italy towards Germany.

It was precisely in the totalitarian Europe envisaged by the Nazis that Fascists and Falangists were sure that their nation would reach the

final, highest evolutionary stage. They both regarded Hitler's New European Order with hope, convinced that their status as ascending powers would confer a central position in the post-war continental organisation on them. In the strategic schemes of the theorists of the two parties, the Fascist and the Falangist nations, which were imperial nations *in nuce*, were to take the lead in this new order alongside Germany. In so doing, they would achieve a twofold goal. First, they would allow Spain and Italy to overcome the international isolation they found themselves in following the Civil War and the Ethiopian war. Second, they would secure a bright destiny for their countries by linking their fate to that of a resurgent Germany.

In fact, the plans of the Blackshirts and the Blueshirts for a New European Order were undermined by Nazi Germany even before the Axis's military defeats in the Second World War. Hitler's projects of European conquest did not contemplate any division of the spoils with collaborators and allies, which were relegated to subordinate positions. This did not stop the *camicie nere* and the *camisas azules* from claiming a leading role in the new continental organisation, to which they were resolved to make a unique contribution by virtue of their supposed superior cultural values. Italy would spread the universal principles of the Fascist revolution, as an original 'third way' between liberalism and socialism. For its part, Spain would operate as the bridge between the former Spanish colonies in Latin America and the new Europe. Moreover, it would be responsible for the spiritual recovery of the continent, acting as the link between Catholicism and Nazism. In general, Fascist and Falangist plans for the *Neuordnung Europas* were the natural outcome of their authentic ultra-nationalist and imperialist ideologies. Furthermore, they represented the successful completion of the ideological and moral fight against the Bolshevik and liberal-democratic enemies that the PNF and the Falange had already defeated within their own state borders.

Ultimately, the comparative analysis conducted so far shows that Fascism and Falangism developed their idea of the nation in very similar ways, although noticeable differences emerge relating to the particular history and culture of each country. On the one hand, this confirms the radically revolutionary and genuinely fascist nature of the Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista. Historical dignity must be returned to its project of nationalisation of the Spaniards. It was entirely in line with that implemented by the PNF in Italy, and it fell perfectly into the process of totalitarian appropriation of the idea of the

nation realised by fascisms in interwar Europe. On the other hand, this study corroborates the hypothesis of the centrality of the nation within the fascist ideological universe, and suggests the possibility of using the idea of the nation for analytical purposes as a tool to compare other fascist experiences. Advisedly, such an idea has to be considered dynamically, as an evolving concept that marked the different phases of fascist political conduct. This will allow future research to capture the national nuances of various fascisms and, at the same time, to further deepen knowledge of the fascist phenomenon as a whole by investigating it from a more comprehensive perspective.

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